English Translations of

Majmoo'al-Fatawa of late Scholar Ibn Bazz (R)

Second Edition

By:

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This file is volume No.11 of 30

(Part No. 11; Page No. 1)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 2)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 3)

Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful]"

(Part No. 11; Page No. 4)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 5)

Chapter on the manner of Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 6)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 7)

Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim

The manner of the Prophet's Salah

Praise be to Allah, Alone. May Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his Companions!

The objective of this concise article is to explain how the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer Salah (Prayers). I would like to present this explanation to every male and female Muslim, so that they may strive to follow the example of the Prophet's manner of offering Salah [prayers]. It is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Offer your Salah in the same manner as you have seen me doing." (Related by Al-Bukhari).

1- Performing Wudu' (Ablution) perfectly: A Muslim should perform Wudu' perfectly as commanded by Allah in the Qur'an. He (Glorified and Exalted be He) says, O you who believe! When you intend to offer As-Salât (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 8)

"Salah without Wudu' is invalid" He (peace be upon him) also said to the Companion who offered Salah in an incorrect way, "When you intend to offer prayer, first perform Wudu' in a perfect way."

2- Facing the Qiblah: That is to turn one's face and body towards the Ka`bah, intending and specifying the prayer the person wants to perform, whether it is a Fard [obligatory] or a Sunnah [supererogatory] prayer, and this should be done in the heart; not verbally. The Muslim in all cases should not pronounce their intention verbally, because neither the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) did so. Whether the person is an Imam or performs Salah individually, they should place a Sutrah (barrier placed in front of a person praying). Facing the Qiblah is a condition for every Salah. However, there are a few exceptions for this rule explained in authoritative books.

3- To pronounce Takbirat-ul-Ihram, i.e. "Allahu Akbar [Allah is Great]" and meanwhile directing one's gaze to the spot where they will soon prostrate themselves.

4- To raise one's hands up to the shoulders or near to the lobes of one's ears, while pronouncing Takbirat-ul-Ihram.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 9)

5- To put one's right hand over the left hand and place them both on one's chest, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do.

6- It is an act of Sunnah to recite Du`a'-ul-Istiftah (opening supplication when starting the Prayer), which is: "Allahumma ba`id bayni wa bayna khatayaya kama ba`adta baynal-mashriqi wal maghrib. Allahumma naqqini min khatayaya kama yonaqqa al-thawb-ul-abyadu min al-danas. Allahumma ighsilni min khatayaya bilma'i wal-thalji wal-barad (O Allah, separate me from my sins as You have separated the east and the west. O Allah, cleanse me of my sins as a white garment is cleansed from dirt. O Allah, wash off my sins with water, snow, and hail." A person may also say instead: "Suhhanaka Allahumma wa bihamdika, wa tabaraka ismuka, wa ta`ala jadduka, wala ilaha ghayruka (Praise and glory is to Allah. Blessed is Your Name, Exalted is Your Majesty and Glory. There is no God but You)." A person may also say any other Du`a' (supplications), which the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say in Salah. It is better to recite these Du`a' alternately in conformity with what the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do. After reciting Du`a'-ul-Istiftah, the Muslim says, "A`udhu billahi min al-Shaytan al-Rajim (I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan)", then, "Bismillah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim (In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful)" and recites Surah Al-Fatihah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The Salah of a person who does not recite Surah Al-Fatihah is invalid." The Muslim should say 'Amen' after reciting Al-Fatihah loudly, if Salah is Jahri (Prayer recited out loud), and subvocally if Salah is Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation). A Muslim is advised to recite whatever they conveniently can from the Qur'an.

7- The Muslim should perform Ruku` (bowing); raising one's hands up to the level of one's shoulders or ears while saying, "Allahu Akbar",

(Part No. 11; Page No. 10)

making one's head and back level and placing one's hands with one's fingers spread on one's knees. The Muslim should feel tranquility while bowing. One should say, "Subhana Rabby Al-'Azim (Glory is to my Lord, the All-Mighty)" three times at least. It is Mustahab (desirable) to say, "Subhanaka Allahumma Rabbana wa bi hamdika, Allahumma ighfir li (All Glory is to You O Allah, Our Lord, and I praise You. Forgive my sins)."

8- To raise one's head from Ruku`; raising one's hands to the level of one's shoulders or ears, saying, in case of being Imam or praying individually, "Sami` Allahu liman hamidah (Allah listens to him who praises Him)." While resuming the standing position, one should say, "Rabbana wa laka al-hamd, hamdan kathiran tayyiban mubarakan fihi mil'u-samawati wa mil'ul-ardi wa mil`u ma baynahuma wa mil`u ma shi`ta min shay`in ba`d (Our Lord! All praise is due to You alone; plentiful praises and blessings as to fill the heavens, the earth, all that is between them, and fill that which will please You besides them)." However, if the Muslim is a Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), one should say when rising up, "Rabbana wa lakal hamd..." It is Mustahab for the Imam and the Ma'mum to put their hands on their chests as done before Ruku`. Both Wa'il ibn Hujr and Sahl ibn Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with them) narrated that this was the manner of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he used to rise after Ruku`.

9- A Muslim should perform Sujud (prostration) saying, "Allahu Akbar". One should touch the ground with one's knees before touching it with hands, if that is possible. If not, one is permitted to touch the ground with the hands before the knees. The fingers and toes should be directed towards the Qiblah, the hands should be stretched, and the fingers should be close together; not separated. The Muslim should prostrate on seven parts of the body: the forehead, the nose, both hands, both knees, and the internal parts of the tips of the toes. One should say at least three times or more, "Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la (Glorified is my Lord, the Supreme)." It is Mustahab to also say,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 11)

"Subhanaka Allahumma Rabbana wa bi hamdika, Allahumma ighfir li (All Glory is due to You, O Allah, Our Lord! And I praise You. Our Lord, forgive me). It is also recommended for a Muslim to supplicate a lot. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, Glorify your Lord in Ruku` and exert yourself in supplicating in Sujud, for your supplications will be most likely to be accepted." The Muslim should ask their Lord for prosperity in this world and in the Hereafter whether it is an obligatory prayer or a supererogatory prayer. During prostration, a person should not bring their hands close to their sides, or put their abdomens on their thighs, or their thighs to their legs. The Muslim's arms should be raised up from the ground, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Adjust your prostration, keep straight in it, and do not stretch your hands on the ground as dogs do."

10- A person should raise their heads from Sujud saying, "Allahu Akbar" and expand the left foot sitting thereon and keeping the right foot vertical with hands on thighs and knees, and say: "Rabi ighfir li, wa irhamni, wa ihdini wa irzuqni wa irfa'ni wa ijburni (O my Lord, forgive me, have mercy on me, guide me, provide for me, relieve me, and console me.") The Muslim should feel tranquility throughout this pause.

11- A Muslim should prostrate again saying "Allahu Akbar" and repeating in their prostration what they did and said in the first.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 12)

12- A person raises his head saying, "Allahu Akbar" taking a pause similar to the pause between the two prostrations; this is called Jalsat-ul-Istirahah (a brief sitting after prostration and before standing during the Prayer). It is Mustahab for the Muslim to complete this pause but there is no sin, if one leaves it. The Muslim, then rises and stands leaning on his knees, or on the ground if he cannot support oneself, then recites Al-Fatihah, some other verses of the Qur'an, and do just as they did in the first Rak`ah [unit of prayer].

13- If Salah consists of two Rak`ah like Fajr (Dawn) prayer, Salat-ul- `Eid (the Festival Prayer), or the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer, the Muslim sits after the second prostration with one's right foot erect, sitting on one's left foot, which is laid down, putting one's right hand on one's right thigh with all fingers close-fisted except the index finger, which is used to point as a sign of monotheistic belief, and the left hand is placed on the left thigh. There is nothing wrong, if the Muslim keeps both the little and ring fingers closed, while rounding his thumb and middle finger into a ring-shape, and uses one's index finger to point as a sign of monotheistic belief. It has been related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) practiced both of these ways. Thus, it is recommended for the Muslim to perform the first way once and the other one once. The Muslim recites the Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) while sitting: "Al-tahiyatu li-llah, was-salawaatu wat-taiyyibatu, assalamu alayka aiyuhan-nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu. Assalamu 'alayna wa 'ala `ibad Allah as-salihin. Ashhadu alla ilaha illa Allah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluhu. Allahumma salli 'ala

(Part No. 11; Page No. 13)

Muhammad wa 'ala ali Muhammad, kama sallayta 'ala Ibrahim wa `ala ali Ibrahim innaka Hamidun Majid; wa barik 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala ali Muhammad kama barakta 'ala Ibrahim wa ali Ibrahim, innaka Hamidun Majid. (Greetings, prayers and all good things belong to Allah. May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be on you, O Prophet. May peace be upon us and on the devout slaves of Allah. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. O Allah, bless Muhammad and his family as You blessed Ibrahim and his family. You are the Most Praised, the Most Glorious. O Allah, bestow Your grace on Muhammad and his family as You bestowed it on Ibrahim and his family. You are the Most Praised, the Most Glorious." After reciting the Tashahhud, the Muslim asks Allah's protection from four evils. One should say: "Allahumma inni a`udhu bika min 'adhabi jahannam, wa min 'adhabi al-Qabr, wa min fitnat al-mahya wal-mamaat wa min fitnat al-Masih al-Dajjal (My Lord, I ask Your protection from the torment of Hell, the torment of the grave, the trials of this lifetime and that after death, and from Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal (the Antichrist)." The Muslim may ask Allah (Exalted be He) for prosperity in this worldly life and in the Hereafter. One may supplicate Allah (Exalted be He) to bestow His favors on one's parents and on other Muslims. One may do this in both obligatory and supererogatory prayers. It has been narrated by Ibn Mas`ud that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught him how to recite the Tashahhud, he told him, "Ask Allah for the most beloved things, which he likes." According to another wordings, "The Muslim should ask Allah for whatever he wishes." In this manner, the Muslim may ask Allah for all prosperity of this world and the life to come. The Muslim ends Salah by Taslim i.e. extending greetings, saying: "As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you) to the right side and then to the left one.

14- In case of a three Rak`ah Prayer [prayer consisting of three units] such as Maghrib [Sunset] prayer, or a four Rak`ah prayer like Zhuhr [Noon], `Asr [Afternoon], and 'Isha' [Night] Prayers; the Muslim stands after reciting the Tashahhud according to the manner previously mentioned,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 14)

and raises his hands up to the level of his shoulders saying, "Allahu Akbar". The Muslim places his hands over his chest as mentioned previously and recites only Surah Al-Fatihah. There is no harm, if one recites some other verses of the Qur'an while performing the third or fourth Rak`ah of Zhuhr [Noon] prayer, because this was stated to be one of the manners adopted by the Prophet (peace be upon him) according to the Hadith narrated by Abu Sa`id (may Allah be pleased with him). There is no harm also, if one does not recite the second part of the Tashahhud in the first two Rak`ah. In fact, it is Mustahab. One recites all the Tashahhud in the third Rak`ah of Maghrib and the fourth Rak`ah of Zhuhr, `Asr, and 'Isha Prayers as previously mentioned and then say Taslim to the right and to the left side. A Muslim should seek Allah's forgiveness three times and say: "Allahumma anta Al-Salam wa minka Al-Salam, tabarakta ya dhal-jalali wal-ikram. La ilaha illa Allah wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulk wa lahul-hamdu wa huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir. Allahumma la mani`a lima a`tayt, wa-la mu`tiya lima man`at wa-la yanfa`u dhal-jad minka al-jad, la hawla wala quwwata illa billah, la ilaha illa Allah, wala na`budu illa iyyah, lahul-ni`mah wa lahul-fadl, wa lahu Al-thana' al-hasan, la ilaha illah Allah, mukhlisina lahudina wa law kariha al-kafirun (O Allah! You are peace and from You is peace. You are blessed. O Possessor of Glory and Honor. There is no god but Allah. He is the One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and to Him Alone is the praise. He has power over all things. There is no might or power but with Allah. O Lord! None may withhold what You have given and none may give what You have withheld and riches cannot avail a wealthy person with You. There is no god but Allah and we do not worship but Him Alone. To Him Alone belong all bounties, to Him Alone belong all grace, and to Him worthy praise is accorded. There is no god but Allah, to Whom we are sincere in devotion, even though the disbelievers may detest it." It is also recommended for a Muslim to say, "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]" thirty three times, "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]" thirty three times, and Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" thirty three times.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 15)

The Muslim, thereby, completes his supplications to be one hundred by saying once, "La ilaha illa Allah wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu wa huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir. (There is no god but Allah. He is the One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and to Him Alone is the praise. He has power over all things)." The Muslim adds to that the recitation of Ayat-ul-Kursy (the Qur'anic Verse of Allah's Chair, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:255), Surah Al-Ikhlas, Surah Al-Falaq, and Surah Al-Nas. It is recommended to recite these Surahs three times after the Fajr and the Maghrib Prayer according to the Hadith that were related to the Prophet (peace be upon him). All these Adhkar (invocations and Remembrances said at certain times on a regular basis) are optional, not obligatory.

Every Muslim, male or female, is recommended to offer twelve supererogatory prayers every day: four of these Rak`ah are before Zhuhr Prayer, two after it, two after Maghrib Prayer, two after `Ishâ Prayer, and two before the Fajr Prayer. These supererogatory prayers are called Al-Rawatib (supererogatory acts that were stressed and regularly performed by the Prophet). The Prophet (peace be upon him) preserved the performance of these supererogatory Prayers in residence. During his travels, he used to offer two supererogatory Rak`ah before the Fajr Prayer and also the Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) Prayer. He (peace be upon him) observed performing them in residence and while travelling.

It is better to offer these Rawatib at home. However, there is no harm if they are offered at the Masjid (Mosque), for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The best of the Salah are those which are performed in one's own house, with the exception of the obligatory prayers."

(Part No. 11; Page No. 16)

Fulfilling these supererogatory prayers is a means to gain admission to Paradise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever prays twelve optional Rak`ah every day and night, Allah will reward him with an established dwelling in Paradise." (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) book of Hadith).

It is also recommended for the Muslim to pray four supererogatory Rak`ah before `Asr Prayer, two before Maghrib Prayer, and two before `Isha' Prayer, because this manner was the tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is recommended to pray four Rak`ah before Zhuhr and four after it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever observes the practice of performing four Rak`ah before Zhuhr Prayer and four after it, Allah will shield him against the Hellfire." (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) with Sahih (authentic) chain of narration on the authority of Umm Habibah (may Allah be pleased with her))

This means that if a person offers four Rak`ah before Zhuhr and four after it,

Allah will protect them from Hellfire according to the Hadith of Um Habibah (may Allah be pleased with

(Part No. 11; Page No. 17)

her).

May Allah grant us success! May Peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad ibn `Abdullah, his family, his Companions, and those who follow him in righteousness to the Day of Resurrection!

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

The way of offering Salah starting with performing Wudu' until Taslim

(Part No. 11; Page No. 18)

Your Eminence, Shaykh 'Abdul 'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz, **As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)**

I have a confusing question and I would like you to answer it in detail. May Allah reward you with the best!

Q: I am a religiously-committed Muslim girl; I like to do good and avoid evil, but I do not offer Salah (Prayer) because I am confused as people in Iraq are divided into two groups, Shi`ah (Shi'ites) and Ahl-ul-Sunnah (those adhering to the Sunnah of the Prophet). Their way of offering Salah is quite different and each claims that his is right. I am haunted by insinuations when I offer Salah according to the way of Shi`ah or Sunnah. Please explain to me the method of performing Salah starting with Wudu' (ablution) until Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer).

A: In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, Companions and whoever followed his way.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 19)

I ask Allah to grant us and your Muslim sisters success and guidance. First of all, I advise you to abide by the approach of Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah (those adhering to the Sunnah and the Muslim main body). Your reference should be what Allah and His Messenger said; you should follow the Book of Allah (Qur'an) and what was authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in his Hadiths and Sirah (the Prophet's biography). Ahl-ul-Sunnah managed to do this for they are the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and their followers in righteousness. As for the Shi`ah, they have many grave and fatal mistakes, may Allah guide them to return to the Book and Sunnah and abandon their Bid`ahs (innovations in religion). We advise you to adhere to Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah until you meet your Lord while embracing the approach of Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah.

With regard to Salah, it is an obligation upon you to offer Salah and not neglect it, as it is the cornerstone and second Rukn (integral /Pillar) of Islam. What is right, is what Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah hold with regard to Salah and other things. You have to offer Salah as Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah do. You should beware of neglecting Salah. Salah is the cornerstone of Islam and abandoning it entails Kufr (disbelief) and misguidance. You should beware of abandoning Salah; you and every male and female Muslim should hasten to offer Salah and observe it on its due time. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayers)].﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 20)

He (Glorified be He) says: ﴾And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Raki'ûn.﴿ He (Glorified be He) says: ﴾And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) that you may receive mercy (from Allâh).﴿ You should carefully observe Salah and advise your acquaintances to do so. Allah promises the observers of Salah to be admitted to the Jannah (Paradise) and to be granted honor. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ Then He numerates the special characteristics of the believers, and concludes this with His Saying: ﴾And those who strictly guard their (five compulsory congregational) Salawât (prayers) (at their fixed stated hours).﴿ ﴾These are indeed the inheritors﴿ ﴾Who shall inherit the Firdaus (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever.﴿ This is a great promise from Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) to the observers of Salah and true believers. In Surah (Qur'anic chapter) Al-Ma`arij, Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾Verily, man (disbeliever) was created very impatient;﴿ ﴾Irritable (discontented) when evil touches him;﴿ ﴾And niggardly when good touches him.﴿ ﴾Except those who are devoted to Salât (prayers).﴿ ﴾Those who remain constant in their Salât (prayers);﴿ Then, he mentions the marked characteristics saying: ﴾And those who guard their Salât (prayers) well.﴿ ﴾Such shall dwell in the Gardens (i.e. Paradise), honoured.﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 21)

We advise you to take care of Salah and observe it perseveringly.

The way of performing Wudu'

With regard to your question about how to perform Wudu' (ablution) and Salah (Prayer), here is the answer:

First, Wudu' is an essential condition for the validity of Salah. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾O you who believe! When you intend to offer As-Salât (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles.﴿ This is the order ordained by Allah (Glorified be He) upon the believers in Surah (Qur'anic chapter) Al-Ma'idah. The Messenger (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Salah is not accepted without purification﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾The Salah of none among you will be accepted if he is in a state of impurity until he performs Wudu'.﴿ Thus, Wudu' is a prerequisite.

Wudu' is by, first, making Istinja' (cleansing the private parts with water after urination or defecation) or Istijmar (cleansing the private parts with a hard material after urination or defecation) if water is not available by stones

(Part No. 11; Page No. 22)

or pure tissues three times or more until the private parts are purified. Using water is better and if one combines them both, it is even more perfect.

Then, one should perform Wudu' according to Shari`ah (Islamic law). At the beginning, it is prescribed that a person should start with Tasmiyah (saying, "Bismillah [In the Name of Allah]"), though some of the scholars regarded it as Wajib (obligatory). Then, they should wash their hands thrice, this is the best. Then they should do Madmadah (rinsing the mouth) and Istinshaq (inhaling and exhaling water nasally) thrice with three handfuls of water. Then one should wash his face thrice starting from the point where the hairline usually begins to the chin, in height, and from ear to ear, in width. Then a person should wash their hands from their fingers up to, and including, their elbows (right side then left). Then they should wipe over their head and ears, then wash the right foot up to, and including, the heel thrice and then the left foot.

The acts of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) are; to do Madmadah, Istinshaq and wash the arms and feet three times and to wipe over the head and ears one time. If a person washes their face, hands

(Part No. 11; Page No. 23)

and feet once or twice, this will be sufficient, but it is better to wash each of them thrice. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed Wudu' and washed each of these parts once and at other times washed them twice and at other times washed them thrice. Sometimes, he (peace be upon him) would wash some of them thrice and others twice. There is flexibility in this matter, praise be to Allah.

It is Wajib to wash each of these parts once thoroughly; a person should wash his face thoroughly along with doing Madmadah and Istinshaq, they should wash their right and left hands thoroughly until the elbow, they should wipe over their head and ears thoroughly, then they should wash their right and left foot including the heels thoroughly. This is Wajib, but if one does so twice, it will be better and if he does it thrice, it will be much better. This is the way of performing Wudu'.

Then one should say: ﴾I testify that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His slave and Messenger. O Allah make me among those who repent and purify themselves.﴿ This is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). It is authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If anyone amongst you performs Wudu' well and then says: 'I testify that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger,' the eight gates of the Jannah (Paradise) would be opened for him and he may enter through whichever of them he wishes.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 24)

Al-Tirmidhy added through a Hasan (good) Isnad (chain of narrators): ﴾O Allah, make me among those who repent and purify themselves.﴿ This is to be said after Wudu' by a man or a woman outside the toilet.

This is the prescribed way of Wudu' which is the key to Salah; the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The key to Salah is purification; its beginning is Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") which makes (all acts which break Salah) unlawful and its end is Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) which makes (all such acts) lawful.﴿

How to offer Salah?

Second, Salah (Prayer) should be initiated with Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") in the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer, `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, `Isha' (Night) Prayer and Fajr (Dawn) Prayer. Then the person should say: ﴾Glory and praise be to You, O Allah; blessed be Your name, exalted be Your Majesty, and there is no god but You.﴿ This is the briefest Du`a'-ul-Istiftah (opening supplication when starting the Prayer). One could also say: ﴾O Allah, put a great distance between me and my sins, as great as the distance You have made between the East and the West. O Allah, cleanse me of sin as a white garment is cleansed from filth. O Allah, wash away my sins with snow and water and hail."﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 25)

This is the soundest supplication reported when initiating Salah. If a person says either one, they are all correct. There are other supplications authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) for initiating the Salah, if a person says any of which, they are all correct. However, these two supplications mentioned here are the briefest. If a man or woman says one of them, it is sufficient. Nevertheless, Du`a'-ul-Istiftah is Mustahab (desirable), rather than Wajib (obligatory). If a person begins to recite directly after making Takbir, it is Ok, but it is better to say Du`a'-ul-Istiftah following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard.

Way of reciting the Ever-Glorious Qur'an during Salah

After Du`a'-ul-Istiftah (opening supplication when starting the Prayer), a person should say: "A`udhu-Billahi mina Al-Shaytan -ir-Rajim [I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan]" "Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful]" Then, they should recite the Fatihah: ﴾In the Name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful﴿ ﴾All the praises and thanks be to Allâh, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).﴿ ﴾The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.﴿ ﴾The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)﴿ ﴾You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).﴿ ﴾Guide us to the Straight Way.﴿ ﴾The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace , not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (i.e. those who knew the Truth, but did not follow it) nor of those who went astray (i.e. those who did not follow the Truth out of ignorance and error).﴿ Then they should say Amen, which is not part of the Fatihah, but it is Mustahab (desirable) to say it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say, after the Fatihah in the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud) and the Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation), Amen, which means "O Allah answer our supplications."

Then they should recite whatever they know of the Qur'an after the Fatihah in the first

(Part No. 11; Page No. 26)

and second Rak`ahs (unit of Prayer) of the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer, `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, `Isha' (Night) Prayer and the two Rak`ahs of the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, where one recites the Fatihah and then a short Surah (Qur'anic chapter) or some Ayahs (Qur'anic verses). However, it is better to recite the medium length Surahs of Mufassal (the last 65-70 chapters of the Qur'an), during Zhuhr prayer, such as Surah Al-Ghashiyah: ﴾Has there come to you the narration of the overwhelming (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)?﴿ Surah Al-Layl: ﴾By the night as it envelops.﴿ Surah `Abasa: ﴾(The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) frowned and turned away.﴿ Surah Ash-Shams: ﴾When the sun is wound round and its light is lost and is overthrown.﴿ Surah Al-Infitar: ﴾When the heaven is cleft asunder.﴿ and the like.

During `Asr Prayer, a person may recite shorter Surahs as well as during the Maghrib Prayer, they may recite, after the Fatihah, what they know of such Surahs or shorter, and if they recite longer Surahs, it is better, for the Messenger (peace be upon him) sometimes recited, during the Maghrib Prayer, the Surah of At-Tur or Al-Mursalat and he sometimes recited the Surah of Al-A`raf after dividing it into two parts over the first two Rak`ahs. However, the Prophet used to recite, in the Maghrib Prayer, the shorter Surahs of Mufassal such as the Surah of Al-Ghashiyah: ﴾Has there come to you the narration of the overwhelming (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)?﴿ or Surah Al-Balad: ﴾I swear by this city (Makkah);﴿ or Surah Al-Zalzalah: ﴾When the earth is shaken﴿ or Al-Qari`ah or Al-`Adiyat and he would sometimes recite longer surahs than that as we said before.

During the `Isha' Prayer, a person may recite the same as they did during the Zhuhr and the `Asr; they should recite the Fatihah and, in the first and second Rak`ah, a short Surah such as Surah Al-Buruj, ﴾By the heaven holding the big stars.﴿ At-Tariq, ﴾By the heaven, and At-Târiq (the night-comer, i.e. the bright star);﴿ Al-Ghashiyah, ﴾Has there come to you the narration of the overwhelming (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)?﴿ `Abasa, ﴾(The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) frowned and turned away.﴿ Ash-Shams ﴾When the sun is wound round and its light is lost and is overthrown.﴿ and similar Surahs or some Ayahs adding up to the same number in

(Part No. 11; Page No. 27)

the first and second Rak`ah. Similarly, during the Fajr Prayer, a person may recite, after the Fatihah, a Surah much longer than that in the Zhuhr, `Asr, Maghrib and `Isha'. After the Fatihah during the Fajr Prayer, a person may recite Surah Qaf: ﴾Qâf. [These letters (Qâf, etc.) are one of the miracles of the Qur'ân, and none but Allâh (Alone) knows their meanings]. By the Glorious Qur'ân.﴿ Surah Al-Qamar: ﴾The Hour has drawn near﴿ or a shorter Surah such as Al-Taghabun, Al-Saf or Tabarak: ﴾Blessed be He in Whose Hand is the dominion﴿ or Al-Muzzammil: ﴾O you wrapped in garments (i.e. Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم)!﴿ During Fajr Prayer, it is better to recite a Surah longer than that recited during the Zhuhr, `Asr, Maghrib and `Isha', following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). However, there is nothing wrong if a person recites shorter or longer Surahs sometimes, for it was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited at times shorter Surahs in the Fajr Prayer. However, to recite long Surahs frequently during the Fajr is better so as to follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

As for the third and fourth Rak`ahs in the Zhuhr, `Asr, `Isha' and the third Rak`ah in the Maghrib, one should recite only the Fatihah, then say: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" and perform Ruku` (bowing). However, it was reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would sometimes recite, during the Zhuhr Prayer after the Fatihah, a short Surah in the third and fourth Rak`ahs. Accordingly, if a person does the same, it is good as they would thus follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is the way of reciting the Ever-Glorious Qur'an during Salah.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 28)

Bowing (Ruku`):

A Muslim should perform Ruku` saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]". He should make his head and back level and place his hands with his fingers spread on his knees. The Muslim should feel tranquility while performing Ruku`, and should say: "Subhana Rabbiyal-'Azim (Glory is to my Lord, the All-Mighty) three times. It is recommended to say: "Subhanaka Allahumma Rabbana wa bihamdika, Allahumma ighfir li (All Glory is due to You O Allah, Our Lord, and I praise You. Forgive me my sins). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Glorify your Lord in Ruku`.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say: "Subhana Rabbiyal-'Azim" in Ruku`. `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: (The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say often during Ruku` and Sujud (prostration): "Subhanaka Allahumma Rabbana wa bihamdika, Allahumma ighfir li (Glory and Praises be Yours, our Lord, forgive me).") This is all Mustahab (desirable). However, it is Wajib (obligatory) to say: "Subhana Rabbiyal-'Azim" once but it is better to repeat it three times or more. It is recorded that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say in Ruku`: (Subhana dhil-Jabaruti, wal-Malakuti, wal-Kibriyya'i, wal-'Azamati (All glory is due to Allah, the Omnipotent, the Possessor of sovereignty and grandeur).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 29)

Subbuhun quddusun rabbul-Mala'ikati war-Ruh (The Most Perfect and the Most Holy, You are the Lord of the angels and the Ruh (Gabriel))) It is recommended to say these formulas following the footsteps of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Rising from Ruku`:

Upon rising from Ruku` (bowing), a worshipper says: "Sami`a Allahu Liman Hamidah (Allah listens to those who praise Him)" be he an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) or a person offering Salah individually. He should also raise his hands to his shoulders or ears as observed when performing Ruku`. However, after standing erect, a person says: (Rabana wa Laka Al-Hamd (our Lord, to You be all praise) or Allahumma Rabana wa laka Al-Hamd, Hamdan Kathiran Tayiban Mubarakan fih, Mil'us-samawat wa Mil'ul-Ard wa Mil'u ma baynahuma wa Mil'u ma shi'ta min shay'im ba`d (O Allah! Praise be to You, much good and blessed Praise filling the heavens, the earth, what is in between them, and whatever else You wish).) It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said and did this. He (peace be upon him) also approved it when he heard a person saying: (Hamdan Kathiran Tayiban Mubarakan Fih) thereupon, he said: (He saw so many angels anticipating who would record it first.) There is no difference between men and women in this regard. Moreover, if a person adds: (Ahlul Thana'i wal Majd, Ahaqu ma Qal Al-`Abd, wa kuluna laka `Abd, La mani`a lima a`tayt, wala mu`ty lima mana`t, wala yanfa`u dhal Jaddi minka Al-Jad (You are worthy of Praise and Glory, this is the most truthful thing a servant says - and we all are Your servants. No one can withhold what You give or give what You withhold, and riches cannot avail a wealthy person against You).) This is also good, since the Messenger (peace be upon him) used to say it sometimes.

"Wala yanfa`u dhal Jadd ..." means that

(Part No. 11; Page No. 30)

the wealth of a rich person cannot benefit them before Allah, for all people are in need of Him (Glorified and Exalted be He). The word "Jadd" is power and wealth. So, if a person is Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), he shall say: "Rabbana laka Al-Hamd", "Rabbana wa laka al-hamd", "Allahumma rabbana wa laka al-hamd" or "Allahumma Rabbana wa laka al-hamd" upon rising from Ruku` along with raising his hands to his shoulders or ears, for all these wordings are permissible for an Imam, Ma'mum, or a person who offers Salah individually. Over and above, the Imam and the person who offers Salah individually shall pronounce Tasmi` (saying: "Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah [Allah listens to those who praise Him]"), then they shall say any of the previously mentioned phrases afterwards. Whereas a Ma'mum shall say: "Rabbana wa laka al-hamd" after standing from Ruku`, but he should not pronounce Tasmi` according to the correct chosen opinion by scholars inferred from the Hadith of the Messenger (peace be upon him). As for this pillar, a person should stand erect without rushing until he returns to the standing position calmly and comfortably. He should place his hands over his chest, for this is preferable. Even though some scholars said that it is permissible to let the hands down, the correct way is to put the right hand on the left one and place them over the chest as observed while standing prior to Ruku`, for this is the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to put his right hand on his left and place them over his chest in Salah. This has been authentically proven from the Hadith narrated by Wa'il Ibn Hujr. It was also reported from the narration of Qabisah Al-Ta'iy on the authority of his father. Furthermore, it was proven to be Hadith Mursal (a Hadith with no Companion of the Prophet in the chain of narration) from Tawus from the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is the best to be done in this regard.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 31)

This is the Sunnah but there is no harm if a person places his hands to his sides and Salah will be valid, but he will not be acting according to the Sunnah. Nevertheless, a Mu'min (believer) should not disagree on this, rather, a knowledge seeker should teach the Sunnah to their fellow Muslims without slandering or disputing with whoever let their hands down, for this act is a Nafilah (supererogatory). Therefore, Muslims in Africa or anywhere should not dispute about that. Teaching should be passed on kindly and wisely. You should also love for your fellow Muslims what you love for yourself, for this is the right thing to be done. It is related in the Sahih (authentic book of Hadith) of Al-Bukhari on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: (We were ordered to place the right hand on the left arm during the Salah.)

Abu Hazim, the narrator, said about Sahl: "I do no know except that he narrates this from the Prophet (peace be upon him)". Therefore, this indicates that when the people stand in Salah, they should put their right hand on their left arm, and the meaning of the Hadith is interpreted with respect to the palm, wrist, and forearm, to reconcile it and the Hadith narrated by Wa'il Ibn Hujr: when a person places the hand on the wrist and forearm, they will be putting it on the arm since the forearm is a part of it. Accordingly, a person should put their right hand on their left one, on the wrist, and the forearm as clearly mentioned in the Hadith narrated by Wa'il. This also includes standing before Ruku` and after it. For standing erect after Ruku` is an essential pillar of the Salah. Some people hasten upon rising and quickly perform Sujud (prostration), this is surely not permissible. Consequently, a person who offers Salah should stand erect

(Part No. 11; Page No. 32)

after Ruku` calmly without hastening. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: (Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood up after Ruku`, he would stand erect for a long time until it is said: "He has forgotten". He used to do the same between the two prostrations.) A person offering Faridah (obligatory prayer) or Nafilah should not hasten but wait after rising from Ruku` and say any of the prescribed formulas. The same is to be applied between the two prostrations, for they should also say between them: "rabbi ighfir li, rabbi ighfir li (O my Lord! Forgive me, O my Lord! Forgive me)" as observed by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The first Sujud (Prostration):

After observing Allah's praise, serenely standing straight and with tranquility after rising from Ruku' (bowing), one is to prostrate himself saying: "Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)" without raising the hands, for it is authentically established that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise his hands in this position. Sujud is fulfilled by leaning on seven parts; the forehead, nose, both hands, both knees, and the toes. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I have been ordered to prostrate on seven bones; the forehead, and he pointed towards his nose, both hands, both knees and the toes of both feet.﴿ This is the prescribed posture incumbent upon men and women. They should prostrate themselves on these seven parts: the forehead, nose both hands with tips of the toes

(Part No. 11; Page No. 33)

stretched towards the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah) joined together, the two knees stretched horizontally with the toes directed to the Qiblah. This is the tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

It is preferable to depend on the knees in advance before the hands while going down to perform Sujud. Some scholars are of the opinion that a person should rest on their hands before their knees but the preponderant opinion is to rest on the knees at first and after that the hands according to what is reported on the authority of Wa'il Ibn Hujr that ﴾the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to place his knees (on the ground) before placing his hands when he prostrated himself.﴿ According to another Hadith reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾(When prostrating oneself) none of you should kneel like a camel, but let him place his hands before his knees.﴿ This was disputed by many scholars; some said that it means to place the hands before the knees and others stated that it means to place the knees before the hands in contrast with the kneeling of camels that start with their hands when kneeling down. Therefore, the Muslim should rest on their knees to differ from camels. This agrees with the Hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr. The correct view is to lie down on the knees placing them on the ground at first then the hands and forehead. This is what corresponds to the Shari`ah (Islamic law). When one rises up, one is to raise their face, then the hands and then stands up which is the legal way that agrees with the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and

(Part No. 11; Page No. 34)

reconciles between the two Hadith. As for the Hadith of the Prophet which was narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah ﴾He should place his hands (on the ground) before his knees﴿ it seems that there is misreportation in the Hadith as mentioned by Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah be merciful with him) for the correct way is to place the knees before the hands to be in conformity with the first part of the same Hadith and agree with the Hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr and other Hadith that assure the same meaning. During Sujud, a person should say: "Subhana Rabbiya Al-A`la (All glory is due to my Lord, the Most High)" three times, five times, or more. An Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) should observe the situation of those offering Salah behind them and avoid hardship. If, however, a person is offering Salah alone, there is no harm if they prolong their Salah for a while. Moreover, a Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) should follow his Imam and supplicate during Sujud till the Imam rises up. It is an act of Sunnah for the Imam, Ma'mum, and the person who offers Salah individually to supplicate to Allah during Sujud. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Glorify your Lord in Ruku` and exert yourself in supplicating in prostration. Your supplications will then merit acceptance.﴿ The Hadith means that it is more promising to answer your supplications. It is reported in another Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾I have been forbidden to recite Qur'an in Ruku` and Sujud.﴿ Accordingly, a person is not to recite the Qur'an in Ruku` or Sujud but during standing if a person is able to stand up, or during sitting if one is not able to stand.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 35)

There should be no recitation of the Qur'an while bowing or prostrating in Salah. One should praise and glorify Allah during Ruku' and do so in Sujud in addition to supplicating to Him. It is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to invoke Allah during Sujud saying: ﴾Allahumma-ghfir li dhanbi kullahu: diqqahu wa jillahu, wa awwalahu wa akhirahu, wa alaniyatahu wa sirrahu (O Allah! Forgive all my sins, the small and the big, first and the last, the known and the secret).﴿ A Muslim should pray to Allah (Exalted be He) by this supplication for the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say it as related by Muslim in his Sahih (book of Hadith). Moreover, it is reported in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say: ﴾A slave becomes nearest to his Lord when he is prostrating. So increase supplications (in prostration).﴿

This indicates the merit of increasing supplication to Allah (Exalted be He) during prostration for the Imam, Ma'mum, and the one who is offering Salah alone. The supplications should be said along with saying: "Subhana Rabiya Al-A`la" and saying: "Subhanaka-Allahumma Rabbana wa bihamdika, Allahumma-ghfir li". It was narrated on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith of Al-Bukhari and Muslim (may Allah be merciful with them): ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say frequently in his bowing and prostrations "Subhanaka Allahumma Rabbana wa bihamdika, Allahumma-ghfir-li."﴿

It is recommended during Sujud

(Part No. 11; Page No. 36)

to supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) for the important things of life and the Hereafter. There is no harm to invoke Him for matters of this world such as saying: "O Allah! Bless me with a righteous wife," or a woman saying: "O Allah! Bless me with a righteous husband, good children, and lawful money" or invokes Allah for other needs. A person should ask Allah for matters of the Hereafter for they are more important, such as saying: "Allahumma-ghfir li dhanbi kullahu: diqqahu wa jillahu, wa awwalahu wa akhirahu, wa `alaniyatahu wa sirrahu. Allahumm-aslih qalbi wa `amali, warzuqni al-fiqha fi dinika. Allahumma inni as'aluka al-huda wa as-sadad. Allahumma inni as'aluka al-huda wa at-tuqa wal `afaf wal-ghina. Allahumma-ghfir li wa liwalidayya wa lil muslimin. Allahumma adkhilni-ljannata wa anjini mina an-nar. (O Allah! Forgive all my sins, the small and the big, first and the last, the known and the secret. O Allah! Set my heart and deeds right and grant me understanding of Your Religion. O Allah! I ask you guidance and success. O Allah! Grant me guidance, righteousness, chastity, and richness. O Allah! Forgive me, my parents and all the Muslims. O Allah! Allow me to enter Paradise and guard me against Hellfire)." A person should supplicate a lot but without prolongation if he is an Imam lest he may cause hardships to those behind him. It is recommended to say during Sujud: "Subhanak Allahumma Rabbana wa bihamdika, Allahumma-ghfir-li" two or three times as done by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Sitting between the two Sajdahs (prostrations)

One should raise one's head from prostration saying Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest) and rest the outside of the left foot flat on the ground and sit on it keeping the right foot upright with the right hand is placed open on the right thigh or knee and the left hand placed open on the left thigh or knee. One should then say:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 37)

"Rabbi ighfirli, rabbi ighfirly, rabbi ighfirli (O Allah! Forgive me! O Allah! Forgive me! O Allah! Forgive me!)." The Messenger of Allah used to say this. It is also recommended to add the following Du`a' (supplication): "Allahumma ighfirli warhamni wahdini wajburni warzuqni wa`afini (O Allah! Forgive me, have mercy upon me, guide me, console me, provide me with sustenance, and grant me good health)." This Du`a' was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). There is no wrong if other formulas of Du`a' are added like saying: "Allahumma ighfirli waliwalidayya, allahumma ad-khilni aljannah wa anjini mina annar, allahumma aslih qalbi wa`mali (O Allah, forgive me and my parents, O Allah, admit me into Paradise and save me from the Fire! O Allah, rectify my erring heart and bless my deeds....etc)." Upon the sitting position between the two Sajdahs (prostrations), one should recite formulas of seeking forgiveness repeatedly as has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The second Sujud (Prostration):

A Muslim should perform the second prostration saying, "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]". He should prostrate on his foreheads, noses, hands, knees, and the tips of the toes as done in the first prostration. He should straighten his back and keep his abdomen separated from his thighs and his thighs from his legs and keep his arms away from his sides. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Do proper prostration, keep straight in it, and do not stretch your hands on the ground as dogs do.") He (peace be upon him) also said, ("When you prostrate, place the palms of your hands on the ground and raise your elbows.") According to the Sunnah, a Muslim should straighten his backs, put his hands on the floor, and

(Part No. 11; Page No. 38)

raise his elbows. He should not stretch his forearms like a dog. He should raise his arms up from the ground and keep his abdomen away from his thighs and his thighs away from his legs. The Muslim should put his hands on the ground and his arms should be raised up from the ground because the Prophet [peace be upon him] ordered us to do so. He should say while prostrating, "Subhana Rabbiyal-A`la (Glorified is my Lord, the Exalted) three times or more. It is also permissible to make Du`a' (supplications) as previously mentioned in the first Sujud.

Jalsat-ul-Istirahah (a brief sitting after prostration and before standing during the Prayer)

One should raise one's head from the prostrating position while saying Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest). It is preferable to sit briefly after prostration and before standing. This is known as Jalsat-ul-Istirahah in which one lays the outside of the left foot flat on the ground and sits on it while keeping the right foot upright. There are no special supplications to be recited during this pause and it is better to do this Jalsat-ul-Istirahah as per the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him), though there is no harm in standing up right away after the second Sujud. Some scholars are of the view that Jalsat-ul-Istirahah is only performed when one person is old or sick. However, the most correct view is that it is one of the commendable acts of Salah (Prayer) which should be done whether one is an Imam, praying alone or in congregation. This is based on the general meaning of the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 39)

﴾Pray as you have seen me praying.﴿ According to the most correct view, it is recommended to do Jalsat-ul-Istirahah even though one is young and healthy. However, this Jalsat-ul-Istirahah is not Wajib (obligatory). This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have neglected it in some of his Salah and because some of the Prophet's Sahabah (Companions) did not include it in the description of the Prophet's Salah.

One should then stand up for the second Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) while saying Allahu Akbar. He may pronounce Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") either upon rising from prostration or upon doing Jalsat-ul-Istirahah. If it is the habit of the Imam to do Jalsat-ul-Istirahah, he should inform those praying behind him lest they should stand up before him. There is nothing wrong if he announces Takbir as he stands up and after he does Jalsat-ul-Istirahah. What matters here is to know that this Jalsat-ul-Istirahah is only commendable and not obligatory.

Standing and recitation in the second Rak`ah:

After standing for the second Rak`ah (unit of Prayer), he repeats what he did in the first Rak`ah. He seeks refuge with Allah against the accursed Satan, recites Tasmiyah "in the name of Allah", and then recites Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter). If a person does not repeat Ta`awwudh (seeking refuge in Allah) in the second Rak`ah, there is no harm

(Part No. 11; Page No. 40)

in that but it is better to repeat it because upon the new recitation, a person should seek refuge with Allah against the accursed Satan. Then, he recites Tasmiyah and Al-Fatihah and then recites a Surah or some Ayahs as he did in the first Rak`ah. The Surah in the second Rak`ah should be shorter than the Surah recited in the first Rak`ah as is authentically reported in the Two Sahih (books of authentic Hadiths) from Abu Qatadah Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with him).

The Second Ruku` (Bowing):

When he completes recitation, he pronounces Takbir for Ruku` as he did in the first Rak`ah, raising his hands saying: "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest) and then he places his hands on his knees separating his fingers as he did in the first Rak`ah, be straight and his head should be on the same level with his back. This is the manner of the Ruku` of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He should say: "Subhana Raby Al-`Azhim" (Glory be to Allah, the All-Mighty) three, five, seven times, or more provided that it will not be difficult for the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) if the person is an Imam. It is desirable to say: "Subhanaka Allahuma Rabbana Wabihamdik Allahuma Ighfir Li" (Glory be to You, O our Lord and praise be to You. O Allah, forgive me). As mentioned above, if he says: "Subhan Dhi Al-Jabarut Wal-Mulk Wal-Kibriya' Wal-`Azamah" (Glory be to the owner of power, dominion, pride, and greatness), it is good too. He may also say: "Subbuhun Quddusun Rabb Al-Mala'ikah Wal-Ruh" (Glory be to the Lord of angels and spirit) all these are good and were done by the Prophet (peace be upon him) during Ruku` (bowing) and Sujud (prostration).

Standing after the Second Ruku` :

(Part No. 11; Page No. 41)

After saying the recommended formulae of remembrance during Ruku` (bowing in Salah), one should rise up raising his hands and saying, "Sami`a Allahu Liman Hamidah" (Allah listens to those who praise Him) if one is Imam (leader in Salah) or offers Salah alone and then complete as stated previously in the first Rak`ah.

After that, s/he should prostrate herself as mentioned without raising the hands saying "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest) while going down to prostration. The praying person should say during Sujud (prostration in Salah) "Subhan Rabiya Al-A`la" (Glory be to Allah, the Most High) and supplicate Allah as much as he can in the light of what we said previously. Then, one rises from Sujud saying, "Allahu Akbar" and sits dawn saying, "O Allah, forgive me." He should observe tranquility, do as related in the first Raka`ah, and then say, "Allahu Akbar" prostrating for the second time as described previously.

The first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer):

You should rise and sit for the first Tashahhud placing the left foot to the side and sitting on it, keeping the right foot vertical, like his sitting between the two Sujuds (prostrations). It is better to do this. However, any way of sitting is acceptable. If it is a four-Rak`ah Salah (Prayer consisting of four units), such as Zhuhr (Noon), `Asr (Afternoon) or `Isha' (Night) Prayer, or a three-Rak`ah Salah (Prayer consisting of three units), you should pronounce Tashahhud in the following form: "All the compliments, prayers and good things are due to Allah. Peace be on you, O Prophet, and may Allah's mercy and blessings be on you. Peace be on us and on the true pious Servants of Allah. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and I also testify that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger." This is what was authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 42)

Any other form authentically reported in Sahih Hadiths will be suitable. However, this is the best form, as it is the most authentically reported one. Then, you should say, "O Allah! Send prayers upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, just like You sent prayers upon Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. You are indeed the Praiseworthy and the Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, just like You blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. You are indeed the Praiseworthy and the Glorious." Then, you should offer the third Rak`ah. There is no harm in rising after saying "and I also testify that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger" without invoking Allah's peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him). Some scholars said that invoking Allah's peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not obligatory here; it is prescribed in the final Tashahhud only. However, Sahih Hadiths indicate that it is prescribed in both Tashahhuds, so it is better to say it in the first Tashahhud also. However, it is not Wajib (obligatory) in the first Tashahhud; it is obligatory only in the final Tashahhud according to some scholars.

Rising for the third and fourth rak`ahs :

When a person finishes the first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/last unit of Prayer) and invokes peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him), for this is the best to be done, he should say: "Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)", for this is authentically reported from the Hadith of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that was related by Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) upon rising for the third rak`ah in Maghrib (sunset) prayer or the third and the fourth ones in Zhuhr (noon), `Asr (afternoon), and `Isha' (night) prayers, afterwards he should recite Al-Fatihah which suffices for reciting further Surahs as authentically reported in the Hadith

(Part No. 11; Page No. 43)

of Abu Qatadah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite Al-Fatihah in the last two rak`ahs. However, if he sometimes recite additional Surahs, this is good, for what is authentically reported in the Hadith of Abu Sa`id (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite in the first two rak`ahs of `Asr as much as that which he used to recite in the last two rak`ahs of Zhuhr. Consequently, this indicates that he (peace be upon him) used to recite additional Surahs in the last two Rak`ahs. Therefore, it is better for a person to do this occasionally to combine the Hadith of Abu Sa`id and that of Abu Qatadah. Accordingly, if a person recites an additional Surah in the third and fourth rak'ahs of Zhuhr from time to time; this is good in accordance to the Hadith of Abu Sa`id, but if he often quits doing that, it is preferable in pursuant to the Hadith of Abu Qatadah, for it is more reliable and clearer than the Hadith of Abu Sa`id. A person may observe both acts alternately. As for the third and fourth rak`ahs of `Asr and `Isha' and the third one of Maghrib, one should only recite Al-Fatihah, for it is Makruh (reprehensible) to recite additional Surahs since there is no evidence on its occurrence.

Ruku` (bowing), rising from it and Sujud (Prostration) in the last two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer):

When you finish reciting Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) in the third and fourth Rak`ahs of the `Asr (Afternoon) and `Isha' (Night) Prayers, and in the third Rak`ah of the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, you should pronounce Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") upon Ruku`, do as previously mentioned, and rise saying, "Allah listens to those who praise Him"; whether you are an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) or

(Part No. 11; Page No. 44)

a person offering Salah (Prayer) individually. If you are a Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), you should say: "O our Lord! To You belongs all praise." Whether you are an Imam, a Ma'mum or a person offering Salah alone, you should recite the Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) reported in this situation as previously mentioned. Then, you should perform Sujud saying "Allahu Akbar"; prostrate as previously mentioned; sit between the two Sujuds and perform the second Sujud as previously mentioned. In the fourth Rak`ah, you should repeat the same steps done in the third Rak`ah. As for the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, there is no third or fourth Rak`ah; it is only two Rak`ahs. The same applies to Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer and Salat-ul-`Eid (the Festival Prayer). You should recite Al-Fatihah and any other Surah (Qur'anic chapter) as reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). You should follow what is known to be reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The last Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer):

Thus, the Salah comes to an end and only the Tashahud remains. When finishing the last Rak`ah of the four-Rak`ah Salah (Prayer consisting of four units), such as Zhuhr (Noon), `Asr (Afternoon), and `Isha' (Night) Prayer, or of the three-Rak`ah Salah i.e. Maghrib Prayer, or of the two-Rak`ah Salah such as Fajr, Jum`ah, and `Eid Prayers, you should sit and pronounce Tashahhud in the following form: "All the compliments, prayers, and good things are due to Allah. Peace be on you, O Prophet, and may Allah's mercy and blessings be on you. Peace be on us and on the true pious Servants of Allah. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and I also testify that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger. Then, you should ask Allah to confer peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) using the following formula:

O Allah, send prayers upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad just like You sent prayers upon the family of Ibrahim (Abraham, peace be upon him). You are indeed the Praiseworthy and the Glorious. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad just like You blessed the family of Ibrahim. You are indeed the Praiseworthy and the Glorious. This is the perfect formula for conferring peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) which is narrated in the authentic Hadith. Using the other formulas that were authentically reported from him will be rewarded.

Du`a' after Second Tashahhud

As per the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is a commendable act to recite a Du`a' after the Second Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) in which you take refuge in Allah from the punishment of Hell, the torment of the grave, the trials and tribulations of life and death, and the evil affliction of Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal (the Antichrist). All Muslim men and women are recommended to recite this Du`a' both in obligatory and supererogatory Salah (Prayer). Then, one may choose any Du`a' to invoke Allah therewith. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) finished teaching his Sahabah (Companions) how to recite Tashahhud, he stated: ﴾Then let one of you choose whatever supplication he loves best to invoke Allah with.﴿ According to another narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Then, one may choose any Du`a' they wish to invoke Allah with it.﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 46)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have supplicated Allah with these words after the Second Tashahhud: ﴾allahumma inni a`udhu bika min `adhab jahannam wamin `adhab alqabr wamin fitnat almahya walmamat wamin fitnat almasih addajjal (O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the punishment of Hell, the torment of the grave, the trial of life and death and from the evil affliction of Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal (the Antichrist.﴿ He also said to Mu`adh ﴾O Mu`adh, I love you, so do not forget to say at the end of every Salah: "Allahumma a`nni `ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni `ibadatik" (i.e. O Allah, help me to keep remembering You, thanking You, and serving You perfectly.﴿ It is authentically reported on the authority of `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite the following Du`a' before making Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer): ﴾"allahumma ighfirli ma qaddamtu wama akh-khartu wama asrartu wma `alantu wama anta `alamu bihi minni anta al-muqaddim wa anta al-mu'akh-khir la ilaha illa ant (O Allah, forgive me my past and future sins, what I have kept secret and what I have done openly, and what I have done excessively; and what You know better than I . You are the Advancer, the Delayer, there is no god but You.﴿ Al-Bukahri also narrated in his Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith) on the authority of Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite the following Du`a at the end of Salah: ﴾allahumma inni a`udhu bika mina al-bukhl wa a`udhu bika mina al-jubn wa a`udhu bika min an uradda ila ardhali-l`umr wa a`udhu bika min fitnat ad-dunya wa`adhab al-Qabr (O Allah! I seek refuge in You from miserliness; and seek refuge in You from cowardice; and seek refuge in You from going back to a feeble age; and I seek refuge in You from the affliction of this world (i.e. the affliction of Ad-Dajjal etc.); and seek refuge in You from the punishment of the grave."﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 47)

These are blessed supplications that are said after concluding Salah. It is also recommended to recite the Du`a' mentioned in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) in the Hadith narrated by `Abdullah Ibn `Amr Ibn Al-`As (may Allah be pleased with them both) that Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "O Messenger of Allah! Teach me a Du`a' which I can invoke Allah with in my Salah." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Say: ﴾allahumma inni dhalamtu nafsi dhulman kathiran wala yaghfiru adh-dhunuba illa ant faghfirli maghfiratan min `indika warhamni innaka anta al-ghafur-u-rrahim (O Allah! I have done great wrong to myself. There is none to forgive sins except You alone. Grant me pardon from Yourself, have mercy upon me for You are the Oft-Forgiving, the Compassionate.﴿ If a prayer chooses other forms of good supplications, there is nothing wrong with that.

Male and Female are equal in Salah: It should be evident that a woman's Salah has to be performed in the exact manner performed by men. This is based on the general meanings of the Hadiths narrated in this regard.

Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer)

After the Du`a' (supplication) recited in the Second Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer), one concludes the Salah (Prayer) by turning one's face to the right and then to the left, saying: As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!). The Prophet (peace be upon him) would conclude his Salah in this manner. It should be noted that there is no difference between men and women in this regard, whether it is in obligatory or supererogatory Salah.

Adhkar (invocations and Remembrances said at certain times on a regular basis) recited after conclusion of Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 48)

After concluding Salah, one should say: "Astaghfirullah astaghfirullah astaghfirullah, allahumma anta as-salam waminka as-salam tabarakta ya dhal-jalali wal-ikram (I seek the forgiveness of Allah, I seek the forgiveness of Allah, I seek the forgiveness of Allah. O Allah! You are Peace and from You comes peace. Blessed be You, Lord of Majesty and Honor)." The Imam should then turn his face towards the people and say: "La ilaha illa Allah wahdahu la-sharika lahu, lahulmulku walahu-lhamdu wahuwa `ala kulli shay'in qadir (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, without partner. His is the dominion and to Him belongs all praise and He has power over all things)." The same Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) should be repeated by the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), whether be he a male or female. If they wish, they might add the words: "Yuhyi wayumit biyadihi al-kayr (He gives life and causes death and all good lies in His Hand). So, the Dhikr can also be recited in the following way: "La ilaha illa Allah wahdahu la-sharika lahu lahulmulku walahu-lhamdu yuhyi wayumit biyadihi al-kayr wahuwa `ala kulli shay'in qadir (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, without partner. His is the dominion and to Him belongs all praise. He gives life and causes death and all good lies in His Hand and He has power over all things)." Then he may add: "Lahawla wala quwwata illa billah la ilaha illa Allah wala na`budu illa iyyah lahu-nni`mah walahu-lfadl walahu-thana'u al-hasan la ilaha illa Allah mukhlisina lahu-ddin walaw kariha al-kafirun allahumma la mani`a lima a`tayt wala mu`tiya lima mana`t wala yanfa`u dhal-jaddi minka al-jadd (There is no might nor power except with Allah. There is no god but Allah Whom alone we worship. To Him belong all favors, grace, and glorious praise. None has the right to be worshipped except Allah. We are sincere in faith and devotion to him, though the disbelievers may detest it. O Allah! None can prevent what You have willed to bestow and none can bestow what You have willed to prevent. No wealth or majesty can benefit any one, as from You is all wealth and majesty)." It is recommended for men and women to recite these Adhkar after each of the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 49)

Then, counting on their fingers, one should exalt Allah thirty three times by saying: "Subhana-allah (Glory be to Allah)", praise Him thirty three times by saying: "Alhamdu-lillah (Praise be to Allah)", and should also say: "Allahu-akbar (Allah is the Greatest)" thirty three times. The total is ninety nine. To make it hundred, one should say: "La ilaha illa Allah wahdahu la-sharika lahu lahu-lmulku walahu-lhamdu wahuwa `ala kulli shay'in qadir (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, without partner. His is the dominion and to Him belongs all praise and He has power over all things)." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever recites this Du`a', his sins will be forgiven even if they were as much as the foam of the ocean.﴿ This Du`a' contains great benefits and abundant good. The Hadith means that if recitation of this Du`a' is accompanied by sincere intention of turning to Allah in repentance, seeking Allah's forgiveness, regretting and giving up sins, Allah will hopefully grant the supplicant abundant good and may forgive his major sins. If these words are uttered out of true faith in Allah and out of sincere repentance, Allah will forgive both major and minor sins. Then one should recite Ayat-ul-Kursy (the Qur'anic Verse of Allah's Chair, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:255) which reads: ﴾Allâh! Lâ ilâha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), Al-Hayyul-Qayyum (the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists). Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Kursî extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great. [This Verse 2:255 is called Ayat-ul-Kursî]﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 50)

It is recommended for men and women to recite this Ayah after the obligatory Salah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ﴾"Whoever recites Ayat-ul-Kursy (the Qur'anic Verse of Allah's Chair, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:255) after every obligatory prayer, then there is nothing between him and his entrance into Paradise except his death."﴿ This Hadith has been narrated from many different chains of narration, which attests to its authenticity. This Ayah is the greatest Ayah in the Qur'an. It is recommended to recite it right after Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). It is also recommended to recite it when going to sleep. Reciting it is a means to protect oneself from Shaytan (devil) and from every evil. This is based on the authentic Hadith narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Reciting it after each Salah is a means to enter Jannah (Paradise). It is also recommended for the Imam, the Ma`mum or one who prays alone to recite ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴿ and Al-Mu`awwidhatayn (Surahs Al-Falaq [no. 113] and Al-Nas [no. 114]). ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴿ ﴾Say: "I seek refuge with (Allâh), the Lord of the daybreak,﴿ ﴾Say: "I seek refuge with (Allâh) the Lord of mankind,﴿ one time after Zhuhr (Noon), `Asr (Afternoon) and `Isha' (Night) Prayers, and three times after Maghrib (Sunset) and Fajr (Dawn) Prayers. ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴿ three times ﴾Say: "I seek refuge with (Allâh), the Lord of the daybreak,﴿ three times ﴾Say: "I seek refuge with (Allâh) the Lord of mankind,﴿ three times. It is also recommended to repeat the following Dhikr ten times after Fajr and Maghrib prayers: "La ilaha illa Allah wahdahu la-sharika lahu lahu-lmulku walahu-lhamdu yuhyi wayumit wahuwa `ala kulli shay'in qadir (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, without partner. His is the dominion and to Him belongs all praise. He gives life and causes death and He has power over all things)." This is according to the several Hadiths reported from the Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 51)

We ask Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) to guide us all to follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), preserve his Sunnah and hold steadfastly to his Din (religion) until we meet Allah (may He be Praised). May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

The Proper Manner of Wudu' and Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 52)

Q: Please, demonstrate the manner of performing Wudu' (ablution) and Salah (Prayer) in accordance with the traditions authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard, for this is urgently required. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: Praise be to Allah. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his household and Companions!

There are authentic Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) showing that he (peace be upon him) used to wash his palms three times with the intention of performing Wudu'. Tasmiyah i.e. saying: "In the name of Allah", is also required here. It is reported in many narrations that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, There is no (valid) ablution for the one who has not mentioned the Name of Allah upon (performing) it. Accordingly, it is prescribed for the person performing Wudu' (ritual ablution) to mention the name of Allah at the beginning of Wudu'. Some scholars deem it obligatory when it is remembered; otherwise there is no harm. Then, a person is to rinse their mouth and inhale water three times and wash their face three times. Then, they should wash their arms up to their elbows three times starting with the right arm. After that, they should wipe their head and ears once and then wash their feet up to their ankles three times

(Part No. 11; Page No. 53)

starting with the right foot. If a person washes an organ only once or twice, it is acceptable, for it is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed Wudu' washing each part, sometimes once, twice, or three times. He (peace be upon him) also washed some of his organs twice and others three times. This indicates that the matter is flexible, praise be to Allah. However, washing three times is better. This way of Wudu' applies to a person who does not urinate or defecate before performing Wudu' as, in this case, one is to perform Istinja' (washing genitals) first and after that, perform Wudu' in the way mentioned above.

As for passing wind, sleeping, touching one's genitals, and consuming camel's meat, they do not require performing Istinja' but it is sufficient to perform Wudu' in the way mentioned above. It is recommended to recite the following supplication after offering Wudu': "I testify that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. O Allah! Make me of those who always repent to You and of those who remain pure" as authentically related from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Moreover, it is recommended for whoever carries out Wudu' to offer two Raka`ahs which is called Sunnah-Al-Wudu' (an act of Sunnah related to Wudu') and if they offer the Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) after Wudu', it stands for Sunnah-Al-Wudu'.

Here is the proper way of performing Salah: A person should, before Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), determine to perform the Salah they wish to fulfill, whether it is an obligatory or supererogatory one. They should not utter their intention openly, for there is no evidence that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so. Thus, pronouncing the intention of Salah is a Bid`ah (innovation in religion). Then, they should say Takbir while raising their hands parallel to the shoulders or the earlobes following the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is permissible to recite any opening supplication related from the Prophet (peace be upon him) such as:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 54)

"Glorified be You, O Allah! And all praises are due to You, Blessed is Your Name and Lofty is Your Majesty, there is no deity but You)", "O Allah, remove my sins from me as You have removed the east from the west. O Allah, purify me from sins as a white garment is purified from filth. O Allah, wash away my sins with water, snow, and hail." He may also says, "O Allah, Lord of Jibril (Gabriel), Mika'il (Michael), and Israfil, You are the Creator of Heavens and Earth, the Knower of the unseen and the seen, You are the Arbitrator between Your Servants in that which they have disputed. Guide me, in that which they have differed, to the Truth, by Your Leave, for truly You guide whom You will to the Straight Path."

There are other opening supplications authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) but the three that are mentioned above are the shortest. It would suffice to recite any of these authentic supplications. After that, one should seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan, saying Basmalah (saying, "Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful]") and recite Al-Fatihah. After finishing it, they may recite what they know from the Qur'an during the first and second Rak`ahs in the Fajr (Dawn), Zhuhr (Noon), 'Asr (Afternoon), Maghrib (Sunset), 'Isha' (Night), Jumu`ah (Friday), `Eid Prayers, Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain), and the supererogatory prayers. One should restrict recitation to Al-Fatihah in the third and fourth Rak`ahs of Zhuhr, `Asr, `Isha' Prayers, and in the third Rak`ah of Maghrib Prayer according to the reports authentically related from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard. However, there is nothing wrong with reciting some Ayahs or short Surahs besides Al-Fatihah in the third and fourth Rak`ahs of Zhuhr Prayer. This is due to the report which is related on the authority of Abu Said (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and indicates the validity of this act.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 55)

It is recommended to recite the long Surahs of Mufassal (the last 65-70 chapters of the Qur'an) in Fajr Prayer, and the medium ones in `Isha', Zhuhr, and `Asr Prayers. It is recommended that the duration of Zhuhr be longer than that of `Asr Prayer. One may alternate in Maghrib Prayer between the long Surahs and mid-sized ones of Mufassal, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have done so.

As for the supererogatory Prayers, they should consist of pairs of Rak`ahs during which a person may recite, after Al-Fatihah, what they wish of the Qur`an. The two supererogatory Rak`ahs performed before Fajr Prayer are an exception. One is recommended to recite, after Al-Fatihah, Surah Al-Kafirun (Surah number 109) in the first rak`ah and Surah Al-Ikhlas (Surah number 112) in the second Rak`ah or recite the following Ayah: Say (O Muslims), "We believe in Allâh and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrâhîm (Abraham), Ismâ'îl (Ishmael)" After Al-fatihah in the second Rak`ah, he may recite the following Ayah of Surah 'Al-`Imran: Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you The two Surahs mentioned above should be recited after Al-Fatihah in the two supererogatory Rak`ahs performed after Maghrib Prayer and after Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah). As for Jumu`ah Prayer, it is recommended to recite Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High, in the first Rak`ah and Has there come to you the narration of the overwhelming (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)? in the second Rak`ah, or recite Surah Al-Jum`ah [chapter no: 62] in the first Rak`ah and

(Part No. 11; Page No. 56)

Has there come to you the narration of the overwhelming (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)? in the second Rak`ah. All these possibilities are authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

One is recommended to recite in `Eid Prayer and Salat-ul-Istisqa' the same Surahs they recite in Jumu`ah Prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) might have recited Qâf. [These letters (Qâf, etc.) are one of the miracles of the Qur'ân, and none but Allâh (Alone) knows their meanings]. By the Glorious Qur'ân. And The Hour has drawn near after Al-Fatihah in `Eid Prayer. The matter is very flexible. One may recite any other Surah after Al-Fatihah due to His saying, So, recite you of the Qur'ân as much as may be easy for you. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also taught the Bedouin who could not pray properly to recite Al-Fatihah and whatever he could recite from the Qur'an.

After completing the recitation, one may keep silent for a short while and then raise their hands as they do when uttering Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) and say Takbir. Then, they bow down making their head and back on the same level and placing their hands with their fingers spread on their knees. They should say, at least three times, "Subhan Raby Al-`Azhim" (Glory be to Allah, the All-Mighty)". Men and women are alike in this regard.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 57)

It is permissible to add "Subhanaka Allahumma Rabbana wa bi hamdika Allahumma Ighfir li (Praise and Glory be to Allah. O Allah! Forgive me.)" It is better to say Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]") more than three times providing that it is not difficult for the Ma'mums (people being led by an Imam in Prayer) if he is an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). It is authentically reported from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the sayings of Tasbih the Prophet (peace be upon him) uttered in Ruku` (bowing) and Sujud (prostration) were counted as ten. It was authentically reported from `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to frequently say in Ruku` and Sujud "Subhanaka Allahumma Rabbana wa bi hamdika Allahumma Ighfirli".

It is also narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say in bowing and prostration, Glory be to the Possessor of greatness, the Kingdom, grandeur, and majesty. and All Glorious, All Holy, Lord of the Angels and the Spirit. A person is recommended to imitate the Prophet (peace be upon him) due to the latter's saying: Pray as you have seen me praying. Then, one should raise their head up from bowing, raise their hands to the level of the shoulders or ears and say, in the case of being an Imam or offering Salah alone, "Sami`a Allah-u-Liman Hamidah (Allah listens to him who praises Him)".

(Part No. 11; Page No. 58)

While resuming the standing position, one should say, "O our Lord! To You belongs all abundant, beautiful, and blessed praise, which fills the heavens, the earth, what is in-between them, and everything else you like." It is authentically established that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say and do so. Men and women are alike in this regard. It is advisable to add, "O, You are worthy of praise and glory, most worthy of what a servant says, and we are all Your servants, no one can withhold what You give or give what You withhold, and riches cannot avail a wealthy person against You." This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said this statement occasionally.

This statement stresses the fact that all servants are poor compared to Allah (may He be Praised).

As for the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), they - upon raising their head up from bowing - should raise their hands to the level of their shoulders or ears and say, "Our Lord, to You belongs all praises." It is permissible for a person, whether an Imam, Ma'mum, or one who offers Salah alone, to say "Rabbana wa laka Al-hamdu", "Rabbana laka Al-hamdu", "Allahumma Rabbana laka Al-hamdu" or "Allahumma Rabban wa laka Al-hamdu i.e. our Lord, to You belongs all praise!" Yet, the Imam as well as the one offering Salah alone should say first, "Sami`a Allahu Liman Hamidah" upon rising from bowing and then say the formula of praise. The ma'mum, on the other hand, should not say "Sami`a Allahu Liman Hamidah", but say one of the said formulas that express praise to Allah. This is based on the reports

(Part No. 11; Page No. 59)

authentically related from the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is obligatory upon a person to be upright, feel tranquility in the standing position, and place their hands on their chest. They should not hasten to prostrate. Some people of knowledge are of the view that a person should let their hands drop, but the correct opinion is to put them on their chest. They should place the right hand on the left one as they did before bowing as reported to be the manner of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Furthermore, it is authentically reported from Wa'il Ibn Hujr and Qabisah Ibn Hind Al-Ta'iy on the authority of his father from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and according to the Hadith Mursal (a Hadith with no Companion of the Prophet in the chain of narration) related by Tawus that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so. Indeed, it is an act of Sunnah to put the right hand on the left one. There is nothing wrong with letting the hands drop to one's sides and the Salah is valid. The Muslims brothers in Africa or elsewhere should not dispute over this matter. They have to advise and instruct one another in kindness, wisdom, and love. It is narrated on the authority of Sahl Ibn Sa`d as reported in Sahih of Al-Bukhary (may Allah be merciful with him) that People were asked to place their right hands on their left hands in Salah. Abu Hazim, who narrated it from Sahl said, "As far as I know, this is attributed to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)." This indicates that

(Part No. 11; Page No. 60)

a person, during Salah, should place their right hand on their left arm in the standing position, whether before or after bowing. In other words, they should place the right hand over the back of the left wrist and forearm. Thus, reconciliation is made with the report related by Wa'il Ibn Hujr and Qabisah, because the arm includes the wrist and the forearm. A person is required to be erect after rising from bowing. It is impermissible to hasten to prostrate without fulfilling this requirement. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood up after Ruku`, he would stand erect for a long period until it was said: He has forgotten. Consequently, one has to perform it in a state of tranquility without hastiness during all pillars, whether it is an obligatory or supererogatory Salah. They should, after bowing and between the two prostrations, feel tranquility and recite the permissible supplications. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to feel tranquility between the two prostrations and say three times: "O my Lord! Forgive my sins."

Afterwards, a person should position themselves and kneel on the floor saying Takbir without raising their hands.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 61)

It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise his hands in this position. A person should prostrate on seven parts, namely: the forehead (along with the tip of nose), both hands, both knees, and (toes of) both feet. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, I have been ordered to prostrate on seven bones i.e. on the forehead along with the tip of the nose [and the Prophet (peace be upon him) pointed towards his nose], both hands, both knees, and the toes of both feet. Men and women should prostrate their heads on the floor so that their nose and forehead are touching the floor. Also, the palms of both hands should be stretched and pointed towards the Qiblah with fingers closed together, not separated. Toes and knees should be bent forwards, pointing towards the Qiblah. Feet should be together, big toes meeting and heels meeting. This was the manner of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is recommended to rest on the knees before resting on the hands while going down to prostrate. Yet, some scholars are of the view that a person should rest on their hands first. According to the preponderant view, they should rest on their knees before resting on their hands in this position due to the report related on the authority of Wa'il Ibn Hujr from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to place his knees (on the ground) before placing his hands when he prostrated himself. Moreover, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, When any one of you prostrates, let him not go down as the camel does;

(Part No. 11; Page No. 62)

let him put his hands down before his knees. This Hadith is taken as evidence by some scholars that a person should go down on the hands before the knees. Meanwhile, other scholars think that a man should go down on his knees before he puts his hands down and then place the forehead and nose on the ground. When he gets up, he should raise his hands before his knees. This is the correct way in accordance with the Hadith of Wa'il. Since the camels use the hands first for going down, the believer should do the opposite and go down on the knees first. This is the permissible way stressed in the reports narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him). As for the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah that He should place his hands (on the ground) before placing his knees, it appears that some narrators misreported the information, as stated by Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah be merciful with him). This wording should be modified to be "he should place his knees before placing the hands", so the first and last parts of this hadith agree with each other and with the Hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr and the relevant traditions conveying the same meaning. While in this position, a person should recite "Subhana rabby al-A`la ('Glory be to my most high Lord)" three times, five times, or more. A person who acts as an Imam should consider the state of the ma'mums lest this matter should be difficult for them. As for a person who offers Salah alone, there is no harm in repeating this recitation many times. The Ma'mum can recite this as well as any other supplications during prostration until the Imam rises. It is an act of Sunnah for a person, if they are the Imam, Ma'mum, or offering Salah alone, to make supplications

(Part No. 11; Page No. 63)

during prostration because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, So far as Ruku` is concerned, extol in it the Great and Glorious Lord, and while prostrating yourselves be earnest in supplication, for it is fitting that your supplications should be answered. (Related by Muslim in his Sahih). i.e. Your supplications will most likely be answered. It is also narrated in Muslim's Sahih that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so increase your supplication (in this state). It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, I have been forbidden to recite the Qur'an in the state of Ruku` and Sujud. (Related by Muslim in his Sahih).

Reciting the Qur'an has no place in Ruku` or Sujud. A person should only recite the Qur'an while standing if they are able to do so or while sitting if unable to stand. They should glorify and extol the Lord in Ruku` and Sujud. In the state of prostration, a person can say "Subhana rabbil Allah" trice and add any supplication they wish. The Prophet (peace be upon him)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 64)

used to make supplications while prostrating saying, O Lord, forgive me all my sins, small and great, first and last, open and secret. It is recommended to say the same supplication following the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as reported by Muslim in his Sahih. It is also authentically related in Muslim's Sahih on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication (in this state). This indicates that it is permissible for a person, whether an Imam, Ma'mum, or Munfarid (i.e. offering Salah alone) to frequently make supplications in the state of prostration. After saying "Subhana rabby Al-A`la", one may add, "O Allah our Lord! All Praises are for You. O Allah! Forgive me." This is according to the said Hadith related on the authority of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) as reported by Al-Bukhary and Muslim (may Allah be merciful with them both) that The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say frequently in his Ruku` (bowing) and Sujud (prostration) "Subhanaka-Allahumma Rabbana Wabi-hamdika, Allahumma Ighfir-li" (Glory be to You, O Allah! Our Lord! All praises are due to You. O Allah! Forgive me). It is recommended for the servant to say more and more supplications and ask for more from Allah. There is nothing wrong with asking Allah to fulfill the worldly wishes such as asking Him to grant you righteous offspring, Halal money, a pious spouse, etc.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 65)

Most importantly, a person should make supplications related to the Hereafter. For example, they may say, "O Allah, forgive all my sins; minor and major, the first and the last, the public and the secret. O Allah! Set my heart and deeds right. O Allah! I beg of You the right guidance, protect me against evils, chastity, and freedom from want. O Allah! Forgive me, my parents, and all Muslims. O Allah! Allow me to enter Paradise and guard me against Hellfire. In the case of being an Imam, a person should not make lengthy supplications lest the Ma'mum should feel difficulty. After that, a person should raise their head from prostration saying Takbir, and lay their left foot on the ground and sit upon it, keeping their right foot erect, their right hand on their right thigh or knee, and their left hand on their left thigh or knee saying, "O my Lord! Forgive me" thrice as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did. It is recommended to add, "O Allah forgive me, bestow mercy on me, guide me, provide me with Your blessings, console me and

(Part No. 11; Page No. 66)

heal me" adopting the tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Afterwards, a servant should prostrate again on the said seven parts of their body saying "Allahu Akbar". They should be moderate and lift their stomach off their thighs, and their thighs off their legs so as not to copy an animal when it goes down. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, Observe moderation in prostration and let none of you stretch out his forearms (on the ground) like a dog. He (peace be upon him) also said, When you prostrate yourself, place your palms on the ground and raise your elbows. While prostrating, a person should neither bring their hands close to their sides nor stick their abdomens to their thighs, or their thighs to their legs. A Muslim's arms should be raised up off the ground because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered and did so. They should not stretch their arms like a dog, wolf, or the like. They should repeat during their prostration what they did and said in the first saying "Subhana Rabbi Al-A`la" three times and "All Glory is due to You, O Allah, Our Lord! And I praise You. Our Lord, forgive me". Then, they should rise saying "Allahu Akbar" and stand to complete the second Rak`ah.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 67)

It is recommended to take a pause similar to the pause between the two prostrations. This is called Jalsat-ul-Istirahah (a brief sitting after prostration and before standing during the Prayer). During this pause, they place their left foot to the side and sit on it keeping the right foot vertical and recite no Dhikr or supplications. It is Mustahab for a Muslim to complete this pause but there is no sin if one does not do that. Some scholars hold the view that the old people or the sick take this pause, but the sound opinion is that this act is Sunnah, not obligatory, for anyone; old or young, sick or healthy.

A person should then rise to perform the second Rak`ah saying "Allahu Akbar." They recite Al-Fatihah and some other Ayahs of the Qur'an and do just as they did in the first Rak`ah. Before that, they should seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan and say Basmalah. There is no harm if they do not seek refuge from Satan as long as they did so in the first Rak`ah. It should be noted that the amount of recitation during this Rak`ah should be less than that of the first Rak`ah according to the report related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Abu Qatadah Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with him). When they complete recitation, they pronounce Takbir for Ruku` as they did in the first Rak`ah, raising their hands saying: "Allahu Akbar" and then put their hands on their knees with the fingers separated as they did in the first Rak`ah, be straight with the head on the same level as the back.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 68)

This is how the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do ruku' according to the hadith of Abu Hameed Al-Sa`idy (may Allah be pleased with him). He should say: "Subhana Rabi Al-`Azhim" three times, five times, seven times, or more provided that it will not be difficult for the Ma'mum if the person is an Imam. It is desirable to say: "Subhanaka Allahumma Rabbana Wabihamdika Allahumma Ighfir Li" (Glory be to You, O our Lord and praise be to You. O Allah, forgive me). Just as mentioned above: if they say: "Subhan Dhi Al-Jabarut Wal-Mulk Wal-Kibriya' Wal-`Azhamah" (Glory be to the owner of power, dominion, pride, and greatness), it is good too. They may also say: "Subbuhun Quddusun Rab Al-Mala'ikah Wal-Ruh" (Glory be to the Lord of angels and spirit). All these are good and were done by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

A person should then raise one's head from Ruku`; raising one's hands to the level of one's shoulders or ears saying, if he is an Imam or Munfarid, "Sami` Allahu liman hamidah." While resuming the standing position, one should say,"Our Lord! All praise is due to You alone; so plentiful and blessings praises that may fill the heavens, the earth, all that is between them, and fill that which will please You besides them)." It is better to add, "O, You are worthy of praise and glory, most worthy of what a servant says, and we are all Your servants, no one can withhold what You give or give what You withhold, and riches cannot avail a wealthy person against You." This was the manner of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he used to rise after Ruku`. But if the Muslim is a Ma'mum, they should say when rising up, "Rabbana wa lakal Al-Hamd...". As they did in the first Rak`ah, they should then say "Allahu Akbar" and prostrate without raising the hands.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 69)

They should do and say, while prostrating and during the pause between the two prostrations the same as they did in the first Rak`ah. While prostrating, a person should say "Subhana Rabbi al-A`la" three times and say the supplications they know to imitate the Prophet (peace be upon him). He (peace be upon him) used to say in his prostration O Lord, forgive me all my sins, small and great, first and last, open and secret. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication (in this state). He (peace be upon him) also said, I have been forbidden to recite the Qur'an in the state of Ruk'u and Sujud. So far as Ruk'u is concerned, extol in it the Great and Glorious Lord, and during Sujud be earnest in supplication, for it is fitting that your supplications should be answered. (Related by Muslim in his Sahih). A person then raises their head saying, "Allahu Akbar" taking a pause to sit between the two prostrations. The Muslim should feel humble throughout this pause saying "O my Lord, forgive me" twice. He may add, "O my Lord, forgive me, have mercy on me, guide me, provide me with Your blessings and console me." A Muslim should prostrate again saying "Allahu Akbar" and repeat during their prostration, what they did and said in the first.

They should then rise and sit to recite the first Tashahhud if the Salah consists of a three Rak`ah Prayer [prayer consisting of three units] such as Maghrib prayer, or a four Rak`ah prayer like Zhuhr, `Asr, and 'Isha' Prayers. It is as follows, "Al-tahiyatu lillahi, was-salawaatu wat-taiyyibatu, assalamu alaika aiyuhan-nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu. Assalamu 'alaina wa 'ala ibadi-llah as-salihin. Ashhadu alla ilaha illa allahu, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluhu.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 70)

(Greetings, prayers and the good things of life belong to Allah. May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be on you, O Prophet. May peace be upon us and on the devout slaves of Allah. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger). This act is authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of `Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him).

It is recommended to say Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala ali Muhammad, kama sallayta 'ala Ibrahima wa `ala ali Ibrahim innaka Hamidun Majid; wa barik 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala ali Muhammad kama barakta 'ala Ibrahim wa ali Ibrahim, innaka Hamidun Majid. (O Allah, bless Muhammad and his family as You blessed Ibrahim and his family. You are the Most Praised, the Most Glorious. O Allah, bestow Your grace on Muhammad and his family as You bestowed it on Ibrahim and his family. You are the Most Praised, the Most Glorious) after the first Tashahhud for the general meaning of the relevant Hadiths that the Prophet did so. There is no harm if the person does not do so in the first Tashahhud. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) after pronouncing the Shahadah in Tashahhud rose to perform the third Rak`ah. After reciting the Tashahhud, a person should stand raising the hands saying "Allahu Akbar" according to what was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the authority of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) and others. A servant should recite Al-Fatihah only in the third Rak`ah of Maghrib Prayer and in the third and fourth Rak`ahs of `Isha', Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers. It is authentically reported on the authority of Qatadah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite Al-Fatihah only in the last two Rak`ahs of Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers. A person should do so in the third Rak`ah of Maghrib Prayer and in the third and fourth Rak`ahs of `Isha'.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 71)

However, it would be better for a person to recite some Ayahs together with Al-Fatihah sometimes due to the report authentically related on the authority of Abu Said (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so. After completing the recitation while performing the third Rak`ah of Maghrib Prayer and the third and fourth Rak`ahs of `Asr, Zhuhr and `Isha', he should bow and say what he stated in the previous Rak`ahs and then rise and stand erect to say the supplications mentioned above that should be said in this position. Afterwards, he should make two prostrations during which he should behave according to the manner previously mentioned. Upon finishing this pillar while performing the third Rak`ah of Maghrib Prayer and the third and fourth Rak`ahs of Zhuhr, `Asr and `Isha', and the second Rak`ah of Fajr, `Eid, and Jumu`ah Prayers, a person should sit down to recite the last Tashahhud as they did with the first Tashahhud. They should say, Al-tahiyatu lillahi, was-salawaatu wat-taiyyibatu, assalamu `alayka aiyuhan-nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu. Assalamu 'alayna wa 'ala ibadi-llah as-salihin. Ashhadu alla ilaha illa allahu, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluhu. Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala ali Muhammad, kama sallayta 'ala Ibrahima wa `ala ali Ibrahim innaka Hamidun Majid; wa barik 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala ali Muhammad kama barakta 'ala Ibrahim wa ali Ibrahim, innaka Hamidun Majid. (Greetings, prayers and the good things of life belong to Allah. May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be on you, O Prophet. May peace be upon us and on the devout slaves of Allah. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. O Allah, bless Muhammad and his family as You blessed Ibrahim and his family. You are the Most Praised, the Most Glorious. O Allah, bestow Your grace on Muhammad and his family as You bestowed it on Ibrahim and his family. You are the Most Praised, the Most Glorious.)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 72)

This formula is the ideal one which was reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). There is no harm if a person recites a different formula which was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). According to the preponderant view, it is incumbent upon the Muslim to confer peace and blessing upon the Prophet while reciting the last Tashahhud in Zhuhr, `Asr, Maghrib, `Isha', Fajr, Jumu`ah, and `Eid Prayers, because the Prophet ordered people to do so. It is well-known that the imperative mood denotes obligation. After reciting the Tashahhud, the Muslim asks Allah's protection from four evils. One should say: "Allahumma inni a`udhu bika min 'adhabi jahannam, wa min 'adhabi al-Qabr, wa min fitnatil-mahya wal-mamaat wa min fitnatil-Masih al-Dajjal (My Lord, I ask Your protection from the torment of Hell, the torment of the grave, the trials of this lifetime and that after death, and from Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal (the Antichrist)." The Prophet (peace be upon him) did so. It is also recommended to supplicate to Allah saying, Allahumma a`inni `ala dhikrika wa-shukrika wa-husni `ibadatika (O Allah, help me to remember You and thank You and enable me to worship You properly). He may also say, "O Allah! I have done great injustice to myself and none except You forgives sins, so please forgive me and be Merciful to me as You are the Forgiver, the Merciful. One may recite as many supplications as he likes providing that they are free of any prohibition. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud when he taught them the Tashahhud, Then, let him choose from the supplications what he loves best and let him supplicate (with it). According to another narration,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 73)

Then, let him choose after that whatever invocations he likes. All these are authentic reports. A person should then say Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) to the right and then to the left side in conformity with the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him), for he (peace be upon him) said, Pray as you have seen me praying. Taslim is one of the pillars of Salah. It is impermissible to end Salah without it. As for turning one's head to the right and left, this act is Sunnah. One can end Salah without this act and his Salah would still be valid. May Allah grant us success!

Du`a'-ul-Istiftah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 74)

Q: A brother from Algeria asks: Some Imams do not recite Du`a'-ul-Istiftah (opening supplication when starting the Prayer) in the Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan). What is the ruling on this? May Allah reward you the best!

A: Du`a'-ul-Istiftah is an act of Sunnah (a commendable act) in both obligatory and supererogatory Prayers. There is nothing wrong if one does not recite it. May Allah grant us success!

Meaning of the expression "ta`ala jadduk" recited in Du`a'-ul-Istiftah

Q: What is the meaning of the expression "ta`ala jadduk" which is recited in Du`a'-ul-Istiftah (opening supplication when starting the Prayer)?

A: It means (lofty and exalted is Your Majesty and Greatness). Allah (may He be Praised) states in Surah Al-Jinn: ﴾'And He, exalted be the Majesty of our Lord, has taken neither a wife nor a son (or offspring or children).﴿ May Allah grant us all success!

Responding to Al-Bilad newspaper which published statements

that were falsely attributed to His Eminence regarding recitation of some Du`a's

upon the mention of Jannah and Hellfire

(Part No. 11; Page No. 75)

From `Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah Ibn Baz to the respected brother editor-in-chief of Al-Bilad newspaper, may Allah help him to do good! Amen. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

In its 11030 issue, Monday 20th of Rabi` Al-Akhar, 1415 A.H., Rawdat Al-Islam page (8) entitled Fataws of scholars, Al-Bilad newspaper published the following question and attributed its answer to me. The question and answer go as follows:

Q: I noticed some Muslims interrupting their Qur'an recitation in Salah (Prayer) to make Du`a's (supplications) suitable to the Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) recited. For example, upon coming across an Ayah speaking of Jannah (Paradise), they say: allahumma inni as'aluka al-jannah (O Allah! I ask You to admit me into Paradise) and coming across an Ayah speaking of the Hellfire, they say: allahumma ajirni mina an-nar (O Allah! I ask You to protect me from the Hellfire). Is that permissible?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 76)

A: It is Sunnah (commendable act) for one who recites the Qur'an in Salah or outside it to ask Allah of His mercy in case they come across an Ayah (Qur'anic verse) speaking of Allah's mercy, to seek refuge with Allah in case they come across an Ayah speaking of torment of the Hellfire, and to celebrate Allah's praises if they come across an Ayah which elevates Allah from all sorts of imperfection. It is also Mustahab (desirable) to say: bala wa ana `ala dhalika mina ash-shahidin (Yes, indeed and I too bear witness that Allah is the best of all judges) upon reciting the Ayah which reads: ﴾Is not Allâh the Best of judges?﴿ It is also Mustahab to say: bala ash-had (yes, indeed I bear witness to that) upon reciting the Ayah which reads: ﴾Is not He (Allâh Who does that) Able to give life to the dead? (Yes! He is Able to do all things).﴿ It is also Mustahab to say: amantu billah (I do believe in Allah) upon reciting the Ayah which reads: ﴾In what message after this will they then believe?﴿ It is also Mustahab to say: la nukadh-dhib bishay'in min ayati rabbina (we do not deny any of the blessings of our Lord) upon reciting the Ayah which reads: ﴾Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinn and men) deny?﴿ It is also Mustahab to say: subhana rabbiya al`ala (glory be to my Lord, the Most High) upon reciting the Ayah which reads: ﴾Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High,﴿ It is desirable that all the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) and Munfarid (one who prays alone) to do that. Since these Ayahs are similar in nature to Du`a' (supplication), they are required to make Ta'min (saying: "Amen" after hearing supplications). The same ruling applies to reciting these Ayahs outside Salah.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 77)

I do not know from where you quoted this question along with its answer. We already sent you a letter bearing No. 40/1 dated 6/1/1415 AH asking for the source from which you take these Fatwas (legal opinions issued by a qualified Muslim scholar).

I have been misquoted at some points of the answer to that question. These include:

- Making Du`a' upon reciting the concluding Ayah of Surah Al-Tin and Surah Al-Mursalat because the Hadith narrated in this regard has been classified as Da`if (weak)

- The response made at reciting the Ayah which reads: ﴾Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinn and men) deny?﴿ as the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not reported to have said this Du`a' upon reciting this Ayah in or outside Salah.

The authentic report narrated in this regard is that ﴾When the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited Surah Al-Rahman to his Sahabah (Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all), he told them that the jinn would repeat the words: we do not, O our Lord, deny any of Your blessings every time they hear the Ayah which reads: ﴾Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both (jinn and men) deny?﴿ ﴿

I wish that you could inform us of the book from which you quoted this question along with its answer. Please send me any question you would like me to answer so that I can do that In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills). Do not quote answers from any source unless I permit you to so that you may not misquote me.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 78)

May Allah help all to do that which pleases Him and may He assist you and us to do every good act. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you.)

Grand Mufty of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Head of Council of Senior Scholars and Administration of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

There is no difference between men and women in the manner of offering Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 79)

A sister from Kenya:

First question: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Pray in the same manner you have seen me praying.﴿ **We understand from this Hadith that there is no difference between a man and a woman as far as the manner of performing Salah (Prayer) is concerened. I have been acting upon this Hdith since I attained the age of pubescence. However, some women in Kenya consider my Salah invalid because the manner I perform it resembles the way men perform it. They claim that women are not allowed to place their hands on their chests like men do and that they are not required to level their backs while in Ruku` as the case is with men. I would like you to clarify for me whether there is really a difference between how a man and a woman offer Salah.**

A: Dear sister in Islam, the correct view is that there is no difference between a man and a woman as far as performance of Salah is concerned. There is no evidence to support the views held by some scholars that a woman's manner of performing Salah differs from that of a man's. The Hadith which you mentioned in the question which reads: ﴾Pray in the same manner as you have seen me praying

(Part No. 11; Page No. 80)

﴿ addresses all Muslims men and women alike. The general rule is that Islamic laws are applicable to all Muslims unless there exists some evidence that specifies a certain category.

It is an act of Sunnah for a woman to perform Salah in the same manner as men are ordered to perform it. This includes Ruku`(bowing), Sujud (prostration), placing the hands on the chest when in the standing position, spreading the fingers out on the knees when in the bowing position, placing the two palms on the ground when in the prostrating position, raising the hands parallel to the shoulders or earlobes, and leveling the back in Ruku`. The woman should also repeat the same Du`a's (supplications) and Adhkar (remembrance of Allah) which men recite in the different positions of Salah. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Pray as you have seen me praying.﴿ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith).

Second question: Sometimes, I offer Salah (Prayer) while repressing the need to break a wind. Is my Salah valid?

A: It is obligatory upon any believer who strongly needs to break a wind, urinate or defecate, not to begin Salah. Rather, one should answer the call of nature, then perform Wudu' (ablution) and offer Salah with Khushu` (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) while focusing on Salah. This is what every believer should do, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (No Salah can be (properly performed)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 81)

when the food is presented (before the worshipper) or when a person is prompted by the call of nature.) Holding back wind is the same as repressing urine and excrement, in that it impairs the worshipper and distracts them from Salah. Therefore, if you feel the need to break a wind, you should rid yourself of it, and then perform Wudu' (ablution) and then offer Salah.

Repeating the recitation of one Surah in Salah

twice or thrice a week

Q: M. M. A from Riyadh asks: Is it permissible to repeat recitation of one Surah in Salah (Prayer) two, or three or more times a week?

A: It is permissible to repeat recitation of one Surah in Salah daily or weekly. It is even permissible to recite one and the same Surah twice in one Salah (Prayer). It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾recited Surah ﴾When the earth is shaken﴿ in the first and second Rak`ah (unit of Prayer).﴿

The Sunnah for the Imam and the one performing prayer individually

is to recite Qur'an in the first Rak'ah (unit of prayer) more than in the second one

(Part No. 11; Page No. 82)

Q: `A. M. from Kafr Al-Shaykh, Egypt. He says: What is the ruling on an Imam if he recites in the first Rak'ah for example (Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.) **and recites in the second Rak'ah** (By the forenoon (after sunrise).) **?**

Answer: There is no blame if the Imam recites the Qur'an in the first Rak'ah less than what he recites in the second, for Allah (Exalted be He) says, (So, recite you of the Qur'ân as much as may be easy for you.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the one who did not perform his prayer properly: (When you get up for prayer, perform the ablution properly, then face the Qiblah, and say Takbir (Allahu Akbar i.e. Allah is the Greatest), and then recite of what you know of the Qur'an.) According to another narration: ("Then, recite with Um Al-Qur'an (the Mother of the Qur'an: Al-Fatihah) and with what Allah wills")

In this case, the Imam did not perform what is better as it is proved by the Prophet's Sunnah and by his deeds that the Sunnah for the Imam and the one praying individually

(Part No. 11; Page No. 83)

is to recite in the first Rak'ah more than in the second one in all the five daily prayers. The one praying behind the Imam, should follow his Imam. May Allah grant us all success!

Reciting Surah Al-Zalzalah in the Fajr Prayer

Q: I noticed that some Imams repeat recitation of Surah Al-Zalzalah in both Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) of the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer. They say that this was done by the Prophet (peace be upon him). What is your opinion? May Allah reward you the best!

A: Abu Dawud narrated on the authority of Mu`adh Ibn `Abdullah Al-Juhany with a good Sanad (chain of narrators): ﴾A man from the tribe of Juhaynah told him that he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) reciting Surah ﴾When the earth is shaken﴿ in the two Rak`ahs of the Fajr Prayer﴿ Al-Nasa'i also narrated with a good Sanad on the authority of `Uqbah Ibn `Amir (may Allah be pleased with him): ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) recited Al-Mu`awwidhatayn (Surahs Al-Falaq and Al-Nas) in the Fajr prayer.﴿ However, it is better to recite in the Fajr Prayer long chapters of the Mufassal (the last 65-70 chapters of the Qur'an) like Surah ﴾Qâf. [These letters (Qâf, etc.) are one of the miracles of the Qur'ân, and none but Allâh (Alone) knows their meanings].﴿ or Surah ﴾The Hour has drawn near﴿ or Surah ﴾By (the winds)﴿ because this was the regular practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He used to prolong recitation in the Fajr Prayer.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Pray as you have seen me praying.﴿ Narrated by Al-Bukhari in the Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith). May Allah grant us all success!

Ruling on the pause made by Imam after reciting Al-Fatihah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 84)

Q: What is the ruling on the pause made by the Imam after reciting Al-Fatihah? I was told that this pause is an act of Bid`ah (innovation in Islam).

A: According to the authentic Hadith, it is an act of Sunnah to make two pauses while offering Salah (Prayer): the first pause is made after Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer). This pause is called Saktat Al-Iftitah (pause for reciting supplication when starting the Prayer). The second pause is made after finishing recitation and before bowing down for Ruku` (bowing). This pause separates between recitation and Ruku`. It has been also narrated that a pause should be made after reciting Al-Fatihah. However, the Hadith narrated in this regard has been classified as weak. There exists no explicit Hadith to support this. It is better not to make this pause. Since this matter is debatable, there is no ground for considering it as a Bid`ah. There is no blame if one makes this pause as some scholars consider it desirable to do so.

The Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) should recite Al-Fatihah at the time when the Imam makes pauses. In case the Imam does not make pauses in Salah (Prayer), the Ma'mum should recite Al-Fatihah even if the Imam is reciting. Then, he should start listening to him. Addressing his Sahabah (Companions), the prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Do you recite the Qur'an while praying behind

(Part No. 11; Page No. 85)

your Imam? The Companions said: "Yes, we do." The Prophet (peace be upon him said: "Recite Al-Fatihah only, for there will be no reward for one who does not recite it in Prayer."﴿

Narrated by Imam Ahmad and Al-Tirmidhy with a good Sanad (chain of narrators). This is as far as Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud) is concerned. As for Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation), the M`amum should recite Al-Fatihah and some Ayahs of the Qur'an in the first and second Rak`ah of the Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers. Allah alone grants success.

What to say during the intervals of Salah

Q: Is it best to make Du`a' (supplication) or remain silent when shifting between various positions of Salah like Ruku` (bowing), Sujud (prostration), returning to the erect standing position from Ruku` or when raising one's head from Sujud to sit?

A: When rising from Ruku`, the Imam or one who prays alone should say: "sami`a allahu liman hamidah (Allah listens to him who praises Him). While resuming the standing position, they should say: (Rabbana walaka al-hamdu hamdan khathiran tayyiban mubarakan fih mil'a as-samawati wa mil'a alardi wa mil'a ma baynahuma wa mil'a ma shi'ta min shay'in ba`d (Our Lord, All praise is due to You; an abundant, beautiful and blessed praise. A praise that fills the heavens, the earth and all that is between them and all that You will thereafter).") This was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). According to other narrations, the Prophet (peace be upon him) may add

(Part No. 11; Page No. 86)

in this position: (ahla ath-than'a wal majd ahaqqu ma qala al-`abd wa kulluna laka `abd la mani`a lima a`tayt wala mu`tiya lima mana`t wala yanfa`u dhal-jaddi minka al-jadd (O Possessor of praise and Majesty! The truest thing a servant has said of You and we are all Your servants. O Allah! None can prevent what You have willed to bestow and none can bestow what You have willed to withhold and no wealth or majesty can avail against You.") As for the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), he should say upon rising up from Ruku`: "rabbana walaka al-hamd (You are our Lord and to You belongs all praise)." Then he may utter the previous addition. There is no harm if he chooses between saying: "rabbana walaka al-hamd" (You are our Lord and for You is all praise) or "Rabbana laka al-hamd" (Our Lord, for You is all praise) or "Allahumma rabbana laka al-hamd" (O Allah! Our Lord, for You is all praise) or "Allahumma rabbana walaka al-hamd"(O Allah! You are our Lord and for You is all praise)." Thus, it should be known that the formula of Hamd (praising Allah) in Ruku` may be recited in any of the following ways:

1- "rabbana walaka al-hamd" (You are our Lord and for You is all praise)

2-"Rabbana laka al-hamd" (Our Lord, for You is all praise)

3- Allahumma rabbana laka al-hamd" (O Allah! Our Lord, for You is all praise).

4- "Allahumma rabbana walaka al-hamd"(O Allah! You are our Lord and for You is all praise)."

Upon making Sujud (prostration) and rising from it, all should say Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest), whether they be Imams, Ma'mums, or people praying individually. This the most correct view held by scholars.

Accordingly, Du'a' and Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) are recited in each shift of position in Salah. As for the sitting position one assumes between the two prostrations, one should say:"rabb ighfirli rabb ighfirli rabb ighfirli (O Allah! Forgive me. O Allah! Forgive me. O Allah! Forgive me)." One may recite it three times or more as one wishes but the first time is

(Part No. 11; Page No. 87)

obligatory and the other times are acts of Sunnah in the same way one says: "subhana rabbiya al-`adhim (Glory be to my Lord, the Great) during Ruku` and says "subhana rabbiya al-'ala (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High) during Sujud; the first time is compulsory and what is after it is an act of Sunnah. It is recommended to make Du`a' when assuming a sitting position between the two prostrations, saying: (allahumma ighfirli warhamni wahdini wajburni warzuqni wa`afini (O Allah! Forgive me, have mercy on me, console me, provide me with sustenance and grant me good health).") It is also recommended to make lengthy supplications during Sujud. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have stated: (So far as Ruku` is concerned, extol in it the Great and Glorious Lord and while prostrating yourselves be earnest in supplication, for it is fitting that your supplications should be answered.) Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith). Muslim also narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make lengthy supplications (in this state).) `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) also said: (The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say frequently in his bowing and prostrations "Subhanaka-Allahumma Rabbana Wabihamdika, Allahumma Ighfir-li" (Glory be to You, O Allah! Our Lord! All praises are for You. O Allah! Forgive me).) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It is an act of Sunnah to look down at the spot of Sujud while offering Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 88)

Q: We offer Salah (Prayer) in the desert and when we stand up for Salah, we do not look down at the spot of Sujud (prostration). Rather, we look to the distance as far as the eye can see. Does this act nullify our Salah?

A: Looking ahead or to the right or left while offering Salah is Makruh (reprehensible), yet it does not render one's Salah invalid. It is an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) to display humility in Salah by fixing one's gaze on the spot where one will make Sujud. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) states: (Successful indeed are the believers.) (Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.)

(It was narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that focusing on the spot where one performs Sujud is among the signs of showing submission to Allah.) Scholars have unanimously agreed that one should cast one's gaze on the spot where one's forhead will be placed in prostration. This causes the heart to be more attentive and removed from distraction. It is, thus, an act of Sunnah to have ones eyes centered on the place of Sujud. One should not look to the right or to the left, or even ahead. One should also remain in a state of serenity and tranquility when offering Salah and avoid such acts, as fidgeting with one's watch or clothes, tidying the beard or blowing one's nose.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 89)

These actions contradict the Sunnah, as unnecessary fidgeting with objects during Salah is Makruh. The Salah becomes invalid if one makes repeated movements unnecessarily. Thus a believer should strive to reach the highest degree of submission in their Salah so as to attain the full reward. Allah (may He be Praised) states: (Successful indeed are the believers.) (Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.) This is also to work in accordance with the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (Be still in Salah.) When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw some people gesturing with their hands while in Salah, he ordered them saying: (Be still in Salah) He ordered them to abstain from fiddling and unnecessary movements. Displaying tranquility is one of the pre-requisites for the performance of Salah. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered one who performed his Salah improperly to repeat his Salah due to his lack of calmness. Displaying the utmost degree of submission while offering Salah is an act of Sunnah as earlier mentioned. Allah alone grants success!

Ruling on passing in front of someone offering Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 90)

Q: Does a woman's Salah (Prayer) become invalid if a man or another woman passes in front of her, whether the passer-by is one of her relatives or not?

A: A woman's Salah does not become invalid if a man passes in front of her. However, it is prohibited to pass in front of someone who is offering Salah or to pass between one's Sutrah (barrier placed in front of a person praying), whether the person praying is male or female. ﴾Salah is only disrupted by a passing of a woman, a donkey, or a black dog.﴿ Authentic Hadiths have been narrated from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in this regard. They were narrated on the authority of Abu Dhar, Abu Hurayrah and Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them all).

Q: If a blind man performs Salah (Prayer), is his Salah invalidated should a woman pass in front of him; whether he is aware of it or not?

A: If he is aware that a woman has passed before him, should he repeat his Salah; and if he was not aware should he not repeat it.

Passing in front of one who is performing Salah in Haram or other places

(Part No. 11; Page No. 91)

Q: What is the ruling on passing in front of someone performing Salah (Prayer)? Is it different to do so in Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) than in any other place? What is meant by disrupting Salah? If a black dog, a woman, or a donkey passes in front of one who is performing Salah, should he complete his Salah or resume it?

A: It is prohibited to pass in front of someone who is performing Salah or between him and his Sutrah (barrier placed in front of a person praying), as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If the one passing in front of a praying person were to know what (sin) is (incurred) upon him, it would have been better for him to stand for forty than to pass in front of him.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.) That disrupts one's Salah and makes it void in case the passer was an adult woman, a donkey, or a black dog.

However, if the one who passes in front of the someone who is performing Salah was other than these three mentioned things, then it does not disrupt the prayer but it reduces its reward as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The passing of a woman, a donkey, or a black dog disrupts the Salah if there is nothing before a worshipper like the back of a saddle.﴿ This Hadith was reported by Muslim in his Sahih on the authority

(Part No. 11; Page No. 92)

of Abu Dhar (may Allah be pleased with him).

Muslim reported a similar Hadith on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), but in this Hadith he did not specify only the black dog but scholars qualify general by means of the specific.

As for Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah), it is not prohibited there to pass in front of those who are offering Salah and Salah is not disrupted by any of the three mentioned things or others as it is a place that is thought to be very crowded. It is very hard to avoid passing in front of someone who is offering Salah. In this regard, there is a clear but weak Hadith that has other supporting narrations reported from Ibn Al-Zubayr and others. The same case applies to Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah) and other similar Masjids (mosques) if they are very crowded and it is hard to avoid passing in front of those offering Salah. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ And: ﴾Allâh burdens not a person beyond his scope.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾What I have forbidden to you, avoid it; what I have ordered you [to do], do as much of it as you can.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Women, black dogs, and donkeys disrupt one's Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 93)

Q: We heard you say that the passing of a dog, a donkey, or a woman in front of someone praying disrupts his Salah (Prayer). So at what distance the passing of these three things disrupt one's Salah? If the woman is Mahram (spouse or unmarriageable relative), does she disrupt one's Salah? Please, advise. May Allah reward you!

A: It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (The passing of a woman, a donkey, or a black dog disrupts the Salah if there is nothing placed in front of a worshipper like the back of a saddle.) According to another Hadith: "[the passing of] the menstruating woman..." This means the woman who is Mukallafah (a woman meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for her actions).

So if one of these three things pass from behind the Sutrah (barrier placed in front of a person praying), one's Salah is not disrupted, but if they pass between him and his Sutrah, that would disrupt his Salah. If one has no Sutrah and any of these three things pass close to him

(Part No. 11; Page No. 94)

about three arm's lengths from his feet, this disrupts one's Salah. But if the passer is further away than this, it does not disrupt one's Salah as it was authentically reported that (When the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed Salah at Ka`bah, he left a space between him and its western wall a distance of about three arm's lengths then performed his Salah.) Anyone who passes in front of those performing Salah beyond this distance is not considered as passing in front of them.

However, anything other than these three things such as men, non-black dogs, and other animals do not disrupt Salah, but it is necessary to take care not to pass in front of those performing Salah at all. Salah is not disrupted but by the passing of a woman, a donkey, or a black dog; except in Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) where a passer in front of those who offer Salah does not disrupt Salah at all, as proven by evidence and because it is very hard to avoid that. Allah is the One who grants success!

The Hadith: "Were the one who passes in front of a person performing Salah to realize the enormity of what he does

(Part No. 11; Page No. 95)

Q: After continuous perusal of Al-Da'wa magazine, (issued in Rabie` Al-Awwal 1/January 11 1982) entitled "Islamic Fatawas" and after reading the second question whose evidence from Sunnah is the report narrated by Abu Juhaim that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (Were one who passes in front of a person performing Salah to know what he incurs, he would prefer to wait for forty than to pass in front of a person performing Salah.) (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions! Is the Hadith properly cited? Because his saying, "...what he incurs, he would prefer to wait for forty than to pass in front of a worshipper," is unclear. May Allah grant you success!

A: The Hadith is authentic. It was reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith The wording of the Hadith is as mentioned in the question. As for the addition "incurs of sins" in some books, this is an inserted phrase that is not correct, but its meaning is correct.

Offering Salah while facing a Sutrah is a stressed Sunnah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 96)

Q: Many Muslim brothers are very strict regarding Sutrah (barrier placed in front of a person praying) and they do not offer Salah (Prayer) unless they find a column in the Masjid (mosque) to offer Salah behind. They, moreover, deny those who do not offer Salah while facing a Sutrah. However, other brothers are tolerant in this regard. Which side is right? Does a line replace Sutrah when there is none? Are their any traditions to this effect?

A: Offering Salah while facing a Sutrah is a stressed Sunnah and is not obligatory. However, a line replaces a Sutrah in case there is none. The evidence is the Hadith stating: ﴾When one of you performs Salah, he should face a Sutrah and should keep close to it.﴿ (Related by Abu Dawud through a trustworthy chain of narrators) The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾The passing of a woman, a donkey, or a black dog disrupts the Salah if there is nothing before a worshipper like the back of a saddle.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih) Moreover, The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If any one of you performs Salah, let him

(Part No. 11; Page No. 97)

face towards something. If he cannot find anything, then let him set up a stick. If he cannot do that, then let him draw a line, then it will not matter if anyone passes in front of him.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ibn Majah through a Hassan (good) chain of narrators, which is stated by Al-Hafizh Ibn Hajar in his book Bulugh Al-Maram)

However, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have offered Salah facing no Sutrah, which indicates that it is not obligatory to do so. An exception to this rule is offering Salah in Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) in which facing a Sutrah while offering Salah is not necessary. Ibn Al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them both) is authentically reported to have offered Salah in Al-Masjid Al-Haram facing no Sutrah when those performing Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah) were passing in front of him. The same is also reported to be the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but through a weak chain of narrators. Moreover, Al-Masjid Al-Haram is most likely crowded, which makes it impossible not to pass in front of those offering Salah. Therefore, doing so is not a Sunnah. The same applies to Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah) when it is crowded and to any other crowded Masjids as well. This is to act in accordance with the Ayah (Qur'anic verse) that reads: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ To the same effect, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When I command you to do anything, do of it as much as you possibly can.﴿ (Related by both Al-Bukhari and Muslim) May Allah grant us success!

What is the right position of hands during Salah?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 98)

Q: We see some people put their hands underneath their navel, while others put them on their chest and deny strongly those who put them underneath the navel. There are still others who put them under their beard and others who leave their hands loose. Which is the right position, may Allah grant you success?

A: Authentically reported Hadiths indicate that it is better for one offering Salah (Prayer), while standing, to put his right hand over his left hand on his chest before Ruku` (bowing). This is confirmed by the Hadith authentically reported on the authority of Wa'il Ibn Hujr and Qubaysah Ibn Hilp Al-Ta'y who reported it from his father (may Allah be pleased with them both). This is also indicated by the Hadith reported by Sahl Ibn Sa`d Al-Sa`idy (may Allah be pleased with him).

As for putting them underneath the navel, it is supported by a Da`if Hadith (a Hadith that fails to reach the status of Hasan, due to a weakness in the chain of narration or one of the narrators) that is reported by `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him). However, letting them loose or putting them under one's beard is not the authentic Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). May Allah grant us success!

Jalsat-ul-Istirahah is Mustahab

for Imam, Ma'mum and those who offer Salah individually

(Part No. 11; Page No. 99)

Q: Many brothers concern themselves with the matter of Jalsat-ul-Istirahah (a brief sitting after prostration and before standing during the Prayer) and blame those who abandon it, so what is the ruling on it? Is it prescribed for Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), and those who offer Salah alone?

A: Jalsat-ul-Istrahah is Mustahab (desirable) for the Imam, Ma'mum, and a person who performs Salah alone. It is a sitting between the two prostrations, but it is short and no supplication is required during it and there is no harm on those who leave it.

There are authentic Hadiths that deal with Jalsat-ul-Istrahah such as the Hadith narrted on the authority of Malik Ibn Al-Huayrith and the Hadith narrated on the authority of Abu Hamid Al-Sa`idi and a group of the Sahabah (the Companions of the Prophet) (may Allah be pleased with them). Allah is the One Who brings success.

Offering Salah (prayer) on an aircraft

Q: How can Muslims perform Salah (prayer) on an aircraft? Is it better to pray at the beginning of the prayer due time or to wait

(Part No. 11; Page No. 100)

until they reach the airport if the airplane arrives at the end of the due time of Salah?

Answer: Any Muslim should perform prayers, when due, as much as they possibly can. If they can perform it standing, kneeling, or prostrating - they should do so. If they could not, it is permissible to perform it while sitting and to move their head as a sign of kneeling and prostrating. If they find a place in the airplane where they can stand and prostrate on the ground instead of moving their head, they should do so. Allah (Glorified be He) says, ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to 'Imran Ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him) when 'Imran was sick: ﴾Pray while standing and if you cannot, pray while sitting. If you cannot do even that, then pray lying on your side.﴿ Reported by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih. This report is also narrated by Al-Nasa'y with a good chain of narration and added: ﴾If you cannot do even that, you can pray lying on your back.﴿

It is better to perform prayers at the onset of the due time. If one delays prayers till the end of the due time to perform them on land, it would be permissible as understood from the general evidence. The same rule of praying on airplanes is equally applied to prayers in cars, trains, and ships. May Allah guide us.

The edge of rug is not a valid Sutrah for a person offering Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 101)

Q: Can the edges of rugs found in Masjids (mosques) serve as a Sutrah (barrier placed in front of a person praying)?

A: The edge of a rug is not a valid Sutrah for the praying person. A Sutrah should be an upright object that is as high as the rear part of a saddle or higher. It may be a wall, a column, a chair, or the like. If one does find some thing that meets this description, one should place a stick or the like in front of them whether one is an Imam or is offering Salah alone. With regard to the person offering Salah behind an Imam, the Sutrah of the Imam suffices him as well. However, if one offers Salah outdoors on the ground and does not find a Sutrah, one should draw a line on the ground.

A proof on this is the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾When one of you performs Salah, let him face a Sutrah and be close to it.﴿ Related by Abu Dawud on the authority of Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) with an authentic chain of transmitters. The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾The passing of a woman, a donkey, or a black dog disrupts the prayer if there is nothing before a worshipper like the back of a saddle.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih). Moreover, it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾When one of you offers Salah let him put something in his front

(Part No. 11; Page No. 102)

and if he does not find it, he should use a stick. If he cannot find one, he should draw a line. (If he did so), there is no blame on him for anything that passes in front of him.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ibn Majah, and authenticated by Ibn Hibban)

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah confer mercy on him) said in his book Bulugh Al-Maram, "And those who claim that this Hadith is Mud-tarib (a Hadith with disagreement over a transmitter or the text) are not right for it is a Hasan (Good) Hadith." May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on passing in front of a person who is offering prayer in Al-Masjid Al-Haram (The Sacred Mosque)

Q: What is the ruling on passing in front of someone offering Salah in the Sacred Mosque? Should one who is offering prayer prevent anyone from passing in front of him?

Answer: There is no blame in passing in front of those offering prayers in the Sacred Mosque. The person offering prayers in Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque) should not prevent those passing in front of him as indicated by evidence that the righteous predecessors including Ibn Al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them) did not prevent those passing in front of them during Salah in Al-Masjid Al-Haram, whether they were circumambulating around the Ka'bah or others. That is because Al-Masjid Al-Haram is a place overcrowded with people and it is not possible to prevent people from passing in front of those offering prayers. So we should tolerate this matter.

No Sutrah is required in Haram

(Part No. 11; Page No. 103)

Q: If the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) of Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) finished Salah (Prayer) and the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) stood to complete what he missed and a woman passed in front of him, should his Salah be invalid? Does the Sutrah (barrier placed in front of a person praying) of the Imam after he finishes Salah continue to the Ma'mum? What is the limit of the Sutrah? May Allah reward you the best!

A: In the Name of Allah. All praise is due to Allah. In Al-Masjid Al-Haram, a person who performs Salah does not need a Sutrah. All people offer Salah in it without a Sutrah, according to the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars), for it is very hard to prevent others from passing. If a woman or others pass before the person who performs Salah in it, his Salah is not interrupted and is valid. It is mostly difficult to prevent this in Al-Masjid Al-Haram. According to a Da`if (weak) Hadith, it was reported that (a woman or others passed before the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he offered Salah in Al-Masjid Al-Haram.)

It was reported that Ibn Al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with both of them) would offer Salah and people would circumambulate in front of him. This means that in Al-Masjid Al-Haram there is no need for Sutrah. May Allah grant us success!

Q: I found a Hadith that reads: (If one of you is praying and a donkey, black dog or woman passes in front of him, his Salah (Prayer) is invalid.) **If the text of the Hadith is Sahih (authentic), what is your opinion about those who pray in Al-Haram Al-Sharif (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) with women passing in front of them as they do Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah)?**

(Part No. 11; Page No. 104)

A: The Hadith is Sahih. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ("A Muslim's Salah is invalidated if there is nothing in front of him like the height of the back of a saddle, by a woman, a donkey and a black dog.") (Related by Muslim in his Sahih Book of Hadith) A similar Hadith is reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) but the dog is not restricted to a black dog. However, this is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). The rule is that the indefinite legal declaration is qualified by the definite declaration. If a black dog, a donkey or a woman passes in front of a person performing Salah, or between him and his Sutrah each of them invalidates his Salah. This is how it was narrated in the Hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and it is the most preponderant of the opinions of the scholars. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars concerning this;

some interpreted it to mean that it decreases the reward or the perfection of the Salah.

But the correct view is that it invalidates the Salah and it is spoiled by this.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 105)

However, what happens in Al-Masjid Al-Haram, is excused according to the scholars, because it is not possible to avoid that in Al-Masjid Al-Haram due to the crowding, especially at the time of Hajj or Ramadan. This is one of the things that is excused in Al-Masjid Al-Haram and is exempted from the general meaning of the Hadiths. Women passing, when performing Tawaf, in front of people offering Salah in Al-Masjid Al-Haram does not affect them and their Salah is valid, whether Nafilah (supererogatory) or Faridah (obligatory). This is the correct scholarly view. May Allah grant us success!

The size of a Sutrah (barrier placed in front of a person praying)

Q: What is the size of a Sutrah? What discontinues Salah? If Salah is interrupted, should one perform it again?

Answer: In the Name of Allah and praise be to Allah. The Sutrah size should be as high as the back of saddle as indicated by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). It is about three quarters of a cubit. If there is a wall, a pillar, or a chair of this size in front of those offering prayers, it would be considered enough Sutrah. If one finds nothing as Sutrah, he should put a stick or the like on the ground or draw a line if the line will be clear on the ground knowing that having a Sutrah is Sunnah, not obligatory.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 106)

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, (When one of you prays, let him place a sutrah [in his front] and be close to it.) Reported by Abu Dawud with a good chain of narration. It is also authentically reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) performed prayers in some places without a Sutrah. This indicates that having a Sutrah is recommended, not obligatory. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, (The passing of a woman, a donkey, or a black dog disrupts the prayer if there is nothing in front of a worshipper like the back of a saddle.) Reported by Muslim in his Sahih from of Abu Dhar (may Allah be pleased with him). Another report was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) but in that Hadith, he did not specify the color of the dog i.e. a black one. According to the rules of Usul-ul-Fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) and Mustalah Al-Hadith (Hadith terminology), the indefinite text is qualified by the definite text. It is authentically reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the woman is specified to be a menstruating woman i.e. one that has reached maturity. This indicates that young girls do not disrupt one's prayer. One should prevent others from passing in front of him while offering prayer whether they are human or otherwise. As the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, (When any one of you prays facing something separating him from people and anyone tries to pass in front of him, he should prevent him, if he refuses, he should forcibly resist, for he is a devil.) Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 107)

This ruling is equally applied to an Imam or Munfarid i.e. a person performing Salah individually. As for a Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), the Sutrah of his Imam would suffice for him. If anything other than these three things pass in front of him, his prayer would not be affected. Furthermore, Al-Masjid Al-Haram is exempted from this rule. It does not matter if passers go in front of a person for the apparent evidence in this regard.

These three things disrupt a Muslim, male or female, prayers if they pass in front of him/her about three quarters of cubit from one's feet or less and no Sutrah is there. If they have a Sutrah, these three things disrupt one's prayers if they pass in front of them between the worshipper and the Sutrah. One should perform the prayer again, if it is an obligatory prayer except in Al-Masjid Al-Haram as mentioned before. May Allah grant us all success!

Gesturing during Salah

is permissible and Salah is still valid

Q: What is the ruling on moving the head as a sign of 'YES' or 'NO' during Salah? For example, sometimes, a companion may be in a hurry to get an answer while I am offering prayer, he might ask me shall he wait for me or not? Then, I reply by moving my head as a sign of saying 'YES', does that render my prayer null?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 108)

Answer: All praise and thanks are due to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn, and all that exists). The best end shall be for the righteous people. May peace be upon His servant, Messenger, and Prophet whom Allah entrusted with His revelation, our prophet, Imam and master, Muhammad bin `Abdullah, his companions, household, and whoever follows his guidance until the day of resurrection. As for gesturing in Salah, it is permissible and does not render one's prayer null. The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) did that and he is the best of creatures and their teacher. His companions (may Allah be pleased with them) also did it. So there is no blame in doing so. If a person asks you while you are offering payer "Shall I wait for you?" You may move your head as a sign of saying 'YES'. There is no blame in doing so. If one asks you about a ruling and you gestured as a sign of saying 'YES' or 'NO', there is no blame. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did that. He replied to Salam (greetings) with a sign of his hand. May Allah guide us all!

The ruling on breaking Salah for urgent matters

Q: If I was offering prayer and the door bell rang and there was no one at home but me, what shall I do? If I break my prayer, will I be sinful?

Answer: If you were offering supererogatory prayer, you may break it and there is no blame on you.

That is to know who is knocking but if you were offering an obligatory prayer, it is not permissible to break it unless you are afraid to miss something important. Men could say Subhan Allah and women could clap to make the people knocking know that they are engaged in Salah. That would be enough and there is no need to break Salah. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ("If something unusual happens during Salah, men should say, 'Subhan Allah (Glorified be Allah)' and women should clap".) Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. So, if it is possible to make those knocking understand that one is engaged in prayer by clapping (for women) and saying Subhan Allah (for men), that would be enough instead of breaking the prayer. But if it is not possible to do so as a matter of distance or they could not hear, there is no blame in breaking the prayer if it is a supererogatory prayer. For obligatory prayers, it is only permissible to break them if one fears to miss something important or urgent and then wants to resume prayer from the beginning. All Praise is due to Allah.

Playing with the Beard and Clothes

(Part No. 11; Page No. 110)

Q: What is the ruling on playing with the beard or clothes during Salah (Prayer)?

A: Playing with one's beard or clothes during Salah is not permissible. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ So Muslims should offer Salah solemnly and humbly. There should be no playing with beards or clothes. Slight movements are forgiven while many movements are forbidden. May Allah guide us all!

Making many movements during Salah

Q: Many people make many vain movements during Salah (Prayer). Is there any number of movements that render one's Salah null? Is there any proof to limit them to only three successive movements? How do you advise those who move a lot during Salah?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 111)

A: Believing men and women should offer Salah in full tranquility, not playing around. Tranquility in Salah is one of the pillars of Salah. It was reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ﴾Ordered the person who did not offer Salah properly i.e., lacked tranquility, to repeat it.﴿ Every Muslim, man or woman, should offer Salah with solemnity, attention, and a heedful heart humbly devoted to Allah. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ It is Makruh (reprehensible) to play with one's beard, clothes, or other things. If one repeats that too much in a successive way, his Salah will be invalid and he will get a sin.

In our honorable religion, there is no limit for these movements. Limiting the number of movements to three only is a weak and baseless opinion.

Only many movements that a servant regards them so renders Salah null.

So if the person offering Salah thinks that he plays too much in a successive way, he has to repeat the Salah if it is an obligatory Salah and has to repent from that sin.

I advise every Muslim, male or female, to pay attention to their Salah and perform them humbly keeping away from vain play. Salah is a great rite and the greatest pillar of Islam after witnessing that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. The first thing Muslims will be reckoned about on the Day of Resurrection is Salah. May Allah guide all Muslims to perform Salah in the way that pleases Him!

(Part No. 11; Page No. 112)

Q: My problem is that I move too much whilst offering Salah (Prayer); I heard a Hadith saying that making more than three movements during Salah invalidates it. Is this Hadith Sahih (authentic) and how can I get rid of this habit?

A: The act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is to focus on one's Salah with Khushu` (the heart being attuned to the act of worship), whether it is a Faridah (obligatory) or Nafilah (supererogatory). Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ A person should offer Salah in a tranquil and dignified manner, for this is one of the most important pillars and obligations, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the person who performed Salah badly and was not tranquil and dignified in his Salah: ﴾Go back and perform Salah, as you have not performed Salah (properly)." The man did that three times. Then the man said: "O Messenger of Allah, by the One Who sent you with the truth, I cannot do any better than this, teach me." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "When you stand up to perform Salah, do Wudu' (ablution) well, then turn to face the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah) and say "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]", and recite whatever you can of Qur'an. Then bow until you are at ease in bowing, then raise your head until you are standing up straight. Then prostrate until you are at ease in prostration, then sit up until you are sitting up straight and are at ease in sitting. Then prostrate until you are at ease in prostration, then get up until you are standing up straight. Then do that throughout your Salah."﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 113)

In a nother narration reported by Abu Dawud, he added: ﴾"Then recite Umm Al-Qur'an (the Mother of the Qur'an: Al-Fatihah) and what Allah wills"﴿ This Sahih Hadith indicates that being at ease in the postures is a pillar or essential part of the Salah, and an important obligation, without which Salah is not valid. Whoever pecks out his Salah (by moving too rapidly), there is no Salah for him. Khushu` is the essence of Salah. It is prescribed upon the believer to pay attention to that and strive to achieve it. With regard to limiting the movements that contradict this ease and focus in Salah to three movements, there is no Hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to support this idea. Rather, this is the suggestion of some scholars for which there is no reliable evidence.

However, it is Makruh (reprehensible) to fidget while offering Salah, such as touching one's nose, beard or clothes and being distracted by that. Fidgeting a great deal invalidates Salah. But if it is done a little, according to what is customary, or is done a great deal but is not continuous, then the Salah is not invalidated by it. However, it is prescribed upon the believer to maintain Khushu` in the Salah and to avoid fidgeting a little or a lot, in order to perform his Salah perfectly.

The evidence that small movements, or repeated movements that are not continuous, do not invalidate the Salah is the report which says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) opened the door for 'A'ishah one day whilst he was offering Salah. It is authentically reported on the authority of Abu Qatadah (may Allah be pleased with him) ﴾that the Prophet (peace be upon him) led the people in Salah one day whilst carrying Umamah the daughter of his daughter Zaynab. When he prostrated he put her down and when he stood up he picked her up.﴿ May Allah grant us success!

Covering the face while offering Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 114)

Q: Is it permissible to cover the face during Salah (Prayer)? Is it permissible to lean on a wall or pillar, etc.?

A: It is Makruh (reprehensible) to cover the face unless for a reason. It is not permissible while offering the obligatory Salah to lean on a wall or pillar, for it is obligatory upon the person who is able to stand while offering Salah to stand erect. As for the Salah of Nafilah (supererogatory), there is nothing wrong with this, for it is permissible to perform it while sitting down, but performing it while standing is better than sitting.

How can a Muslim make up for Salah he missed?

Q: How can a Muslim make up for the Salah (Prayer) he missed? If it is Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud), should he perform it as so?

A: If a person missed an obligatory Salah, he should hasten to perform it as it should be; if it is Jahri, he should perform it as Jahri such as the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer. If it is a Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation), he should perform it as Sirri,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 115)

such as the Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers. This is if he missed it out of forgetfulness, sleep or sickness thinking that he could not perform it while being ill so he delayed it out of ignorance in order to perform it when he recovers.

If a person abandons Salah out of negligence or laziness, the scholars differ with regard to accusing him of Kufr (disbelief), but the most preponderant view of scholars is that he commits Kufr and he does not have to make up for it and has to repent of this. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Between a man and Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and Kufr (disbelief) there stands his giving up Salah.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"The covenant that stands between us and them is Salah; whoever neglects it commits Kufr."﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad and the Four Compilers of Hadith [Imams Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhi, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah] with a Sahih (authentic) Isnad (chain of narrators))

If a person abandons Salah denying its obligation, he commits Kufr according to Ijma` (consensus of scholars). May Allah grant us safety!

The conclusion is that if a person abandons Salah purposefully, denying its obligation, they are Kafir (disbelievers) according to Ijma`. However, if a person abandons it out of negligence or laziness, they resemble the hypocrites and this is a major Kufr according to the most preponderant view of scholars.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 116)

This person should repent sincerely to Allah by regretting what they did, giving this up and determining not to repeat it. This sincere Tawbah (repentance to Allah) is enough, praise be to Allah, and they do not have to make up for the Salah they missed.

Loud Recitation for a Munfarid

Q: Abu `Abdullah from Riyadh asks about the ruling on loud recitation when practiced by a Munfarid (a person offering Salah individually). Is it permissible to recite it subvocally?

A: It is an act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) for an Imam and Munfarid to recite aloud in Jahri Salah (prayers recited out loud) such as Fajr (Dawn) Prayer and the first two units of Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and `Isha' (Night) Prayer. There is no blame on them if they recite them subvocally but it is not the Sunnah. If a Munfarid sees that reciting softly makes his heart more solemn, he will not be blamed for that. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did both kinds of recitation in the late night Prayers, he sometimes recited aloud and sometimes subvocally as mentioned by `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). The Sunnah is to recite loudly as a way to follow the Prophet (peace be upon him) as that would benefit the group and make them listen to Allah's Words whether the Salah is obligatory or supererogatory. May Allah guide us all!

Reciting from Al-Mus-haf during the obligatory Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 117)

Q: Is it permissible for the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) to recite from a Mus-haf (Arabic Qur'an) during the five daily Salahs (Prayers), especially in Fajr (Dawn) Prayer as it is recommended in Fajr Prayer to recite as much as possible to avoid making mistakes or forgetting to recite any verse?

A: It is permissible when necessary to recite from a Mus-haf. Moreover, it is permissible also to do so in Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) by anyone who does not memorize the Qur'an by heart. Dhakwan the freedman of `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) used to be her Imam in Ramadan and recited from a Mus-haf. This was reported by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih as a stressed Hadith. The Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is to recite as much as possible in Fajr Prayer. If the Imam does not memorize the Mufassal (the last 65-70 chapters of the Qur'an) or other Surahs (Qur'anic chapter), then it would be permissible to recite from a copy of the Qur'an. Yet, the Imam should preoccupy himself with memorizing the Qur'an and do his best in this regard to memorize the Mufassal Surahs at least so that he would not need to recite from a Mus-haf. The Mufassal Surahs start with Surat Qaf until the end of the Qur'an. Whoever does his best to memorize the Qur'an, Allah will make it easy for him. Allah (May He be exalted) says: ﴾And whosoever fears Allâh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty).﴿ Allah (May He be exalted) says: ﴾And We have indeed made the Qur'ân easy to understand and remember; then is there any one who will remember (or receive admonition)?﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 118)

May Allah guide us all!

What the latecomer catches up with the Imam is the beginning of his own Salah

Q: In the `Isha' (Night) Prayer, I caught up with the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) in the last two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer), which are Sirri (Prayer with subvocal recitation), what should I do in the first two Rak`ahs which I missed? Should I perform them as Sirri or Jahri (Prayer recited out loud)?

A: The soundest viewpoint is that what the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) catches up with the Imam is the beginning of his own Salah, and what he makes up for is the last part of his Salah. This is the most preponderant of the opinions of the scholars. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (When the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) has been pronounced for Salah, do not go running to it, but go walking in tranquility and whatever you catch up with, pray, and whatever you have missed, complete it.) In another wording: (make up for it.) It means complete as "making up for", is used here in the sense of complete,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 119)

in order to combine between the two narrations.

This is the meaning of Allah's Saying: (When you have finished As-Salât (the congregational prayer), remember Allâh) He (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (So when you have accomplished your Manâsik, remember Allâh) The two Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) here mean "when you complete".

If one caught up for instance two Rak`ahs from the `Isha' or Maghrib Prayer, he should make up for the rest in their respective manner. If it is the Magrib, he should make up for the second Rak`ah as Jahri and the third as Sirri. If it is `Isha' Prayer, he should make up for the last two Rak`ahs as Sirri and recite the Fatihah only without any small Surah, for they are the last part of his Salah.

Ruling on reciting Basmalah aloud in Salah

Q: What is the ruling on reciting Basmalah (Basmalah (saying, "Bismillah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful]") audibly before reciting Surah Al-Fatihah or any Surah (Chapter from the Qur'an)? A: Scholars differed concerning this issue. Some were of the view that it is recommended to recite it audibly

(Part No. 11; Page No. 120)

while others disapproved that and regarded reciting it inaudibly as preferable. However, the later is the preponderant and correct opinion as authentically stated in the authentic Hadith on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): ("I offered Salah behind Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him), Abu Bakr and `Umar. They did not recite "Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim" audibly.) There are other Hadiths that center on the same meaning. However, there are some Hadiths which imply the recommendation of reciting it aloud but all of them are weak. We do not know any authentic Hadith regarding reciting Basmalah audibly that supports the recommendation for reciting it aloud. We should take into consideration that the matter of Basmalah and reciting it aloud is flexible and easy. Therefore, there should be no dispute over it. If an Imam (leader in Salah) recites it aloud in order to inform those who offer Salah (Prayer) behind him that he recites it, there is no harm, but it is better for him to utter it inaudibly in general in accordance with the authentic Hadiths in the issue.

President of the Islamic University

(Part No. 11; Page No. 121)

Q: One of the Imams (those who lead congregational Prayer) used to recite the Qur'an during Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) as usual and did not recite the Basmalah loudly in Al-Fatihah or other Surahs (Qur'anic chapters); However, when he reached Surat-ul-Falaq, he recited it aloud. Likewise, he did the same in Surat-ul-Nas. Is there evidence from Shari`ah (Islamic law) on his act?

It is an act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) to avoid reciting the Basmalah audibly in the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud). If an Imam sometimes recites it aloud so that those who offer Salah behind him know that he says it, that is acceptable, there is no harm; for it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs did not recite the Basmalah aloud.

Saying 'Amen' aloud

behind the Imam in Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation)

Q: What is the ruling on saying "Amen" aloud behind an Imam in Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer?

A: We do not know any proof from the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of the Messenger (peace be upon him), or the practice of the Four Caliphs to permit this action.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 122)

It is authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: (He who did any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.) A person who confirms the permissibility of this action has to submit a proof. As for saying 'Amen' aloud after reciting Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter) in Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud), it is permissible for the Imam and the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) to do so.

The wisdom behind the loud and secret recitation of the Qur'an during Salah

Q: Why is it prescribed to recite aloud in Maghrib, 'Isha' and Fajr, and inaudibly in the other obligatory Salahs? What is the evidence for that?

A: Allah (may He be Praised) knows best the underlying wisdom behind this ordinance to recite audibly in those prayers. It is most likely that at night and at the time of Fajr prayer, people are more likely to benefit from audible recitation, as there are less distractions around them than at times of Zhuhr and 'Asr. Finally, Allah knows the best.

Ruling on reciting out loud in Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 123)

Q: Is it permissible to recite Sirri Salah audibly? May Allah reward you !

A: Though it is permissible to recite out loud in Sirri Salah (Prayer with inaudible recitation), this is undesirable. The Sunnah of the Prophet is to recite inaudibly in this Salah, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite inaudibly in Sirri Salah and recite aloud in Jahri Salah (Prayer recited audibly). It is desirable that one should sometimes audibly recite some Ayahs in Sirri Salah, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do so. (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) from the Hadith of Abu Qatada al-Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him).

Loud Recitation in Tahajjud (Night Prayer)

Q: Sister M. `A. H. from Riyadh says, 'If one prays as Imam with his wife in night prayers, should he recite the Qur'an aloud? May Allah benefit us and you!

(Part No. 11; Page No. 124)

Answer: The Sunnah in night prayers is to recite audibly whether the one offers the prayer individually, with his wife, or with other women. Women should pray behind him even if she is the only woman there. If one performs his prayer individually, he has two options; to recite audibly or inaudibly. He should do what is best for his heart. When `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked about this, she said, (When the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered the (optional) Night Prayer, sometimes he would recite aloud and sometimes inaudibly.) It is authentically reported from Hudhayfah (may Allah be pleased with him) that (the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to recite aloud in the night prayer. When he recited a verse of mercy, he would stop and ask Allah for His mercy, when he recited a verse of torment, he would stop and seek refuge in Allah from the torment; and when he recited a verse of glorification he would glorify Allah.) This means that upon reciting the verses mentioning Allah's Names and Attributes, one should glorify Allah. Allah (Glorified be He) states, (Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) you have a good example to follow)

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated, (Perform your prayers as

(Part No. 11; Page No. 125)

you see me perform my prayers) Reported by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih

These Hadiths indicate that audible Recitation in Tahajjud (night prayer) is better as this makes one's heart more humble and is more useful to listeners, unless there are sick people, or asleep , worshippers, or reciters around him. It is then best to lower one's voice in a way that does not distract those offering prayers, awaken sleepers, or annoy the sick.

If one is offering night prayers individually, there is no harm in reciting inaudibly as indicated in the report of `Aishah. It may also be preferable as it brings serenity to one's heart and better for him at times. May Allah guide us all!

It is the Sunnah to supplicate subvocally during Prayer

Q: A brother from Sabt Al-`laya asks: There are some people who raise their voices while supplicating to the degree that this interrupts those around them. What is the ruling on such behavior? Please, advise.

A: It is an act of the Sunnah to supplicate subvocally whether in Salah or at any other time because Allah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 126)

(may He be Praised) says: ﴾Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He likes not the aggressors.﴿ This is because supplicating subvocally is better to achieve devotion and attention. On the other hand, raising one's voice confuses those who offer Salah around such a person and those reciting the Qur'an. An exception is the case wherein supplications entail Ta'min (saying Amen) such as Du`a' Al-Qunut (supplication recited while standing after bowing in the last unit of Prayer) and prayer for rain. In such cases, the Imam should say the supplications aloud in order for those hearing him to say 'amen'. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on reciting aloud

when offering Salah individually

Q: A.`A from Islamabad says: Is it permissible for me to recite aloud a bit during Salah where it is only me that can hear, because in doing so I feel more sincere and humble?

A: If one offers Salah by oneself, such as in the supererogatory night Salah, then one may do whatever is more suitable to one's heart. One may recite aloud or audibly on condition that none complains of his loud recitation. If this bothers any one around him, such as those performing Salah, those reciting the Glorious Qur'an, or those sleeping, then he has to lower his voice. As for

(Part No. 11; Page No. 127)

Salah offered during the day, such as Salat-ul-Duha (Sunnah Prayer after sunrise), the Sunnah of Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, it is recommended to recite inaudibly. It is permissible for the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) to recite some Ayahs audibly at times, for Abu Qatada al-Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him) said: (Sometimes the Prophet (peace be upon him) would recite a verse aloud (while offering the Zhuhr and `Asr Prayers) so that we would hear it.) The Salah here refers to Zhuhr and `Asr. May Allah grant us success!

Reciting audibly in Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation) to avoid distraction

Q: Many a time Satan prompts me in Salah causing me confusion. This distracts me and I become unaware of the Ayahs I recite or the number of Rak`ahs I have performed. Upon hearing that one is not rewarded for Salah except when performing it with an attentive heart, I began reciting aloud a bit in my Salah so as to rid myself of these promptings. Actually, I became aware of what I recite. Is this permissible, as no one but me hears my voice?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 128)

A: It is prescribed for the believer, male or female, to concentrate on Salah, perform it with an attentive heart, and exert his/her utmost effort to observe solemnity and full submissiveness during it. Allah (may He be Praised) states: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ When one is greatly disturbed by insinuations, it is permissible to spit (blowing air) over the left shoulder three times while in Salah and seek refuge in Allah against the devil. The Prophet (peace be upon him) directed 'Uthman ibn Abul-'As Ath-Thaqafi (may Allah be pleased with him) to do this when he complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the much insinuating thoughts that distract him during Salah. There is no harm in reciting audibly in Sirri Salah (Prayer with inaudible recitation) so that you may hear yourself and silence any insinuations. As for the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited audibly), such as Fajr (Dawn) prayer, and the first two Rak`ahs of Maghrib (Sunset) and `Isha' (Night) Prayer; it is desirable for both men and women to recite audibly during them, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do so. The same applies to supererogatory night Salah.

How to compensate the missed Rak`ahs of Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer

(Part No. 11; Page No. 129)

Q: S.`A. M. is an Egyptian working in the Eastern Region. He says, 'Sometimes I offer Salah with the Imam but I only catch up with one Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) of Maghrib. After the Imam finishes Salah, I stand to make up for the second (missed) Rak`ah by reciting Al-Fatihah (the Opening Chapter) and another Surah aloud. I sit for Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) and then I perform the third Rak`ah vocally. At the end, I sit for the last Tashahhud. Is my Salah valid or not?

A: Your Salah is valid and performing the second Rak`ah vocally is permissible but not very loudly in order not to disturb the surrounding praying people or those who mention Allah. As for the last Rak`ah, it should not be performed vocally, because it is a Sirri Rak`ah (not vocal). You catch up with the first Rak`ah which is your first Rak`ah according to the soundest opinion and what you compensate is the subsequent Rak`ahs. May Allah grant us success!

Turning one's head during Salah to seek refuge (in Allah) from Satan

(Part No. 11; Page No. 130)

Q: A Muslim sister asks about the ruling on turning one's head during Salah to seek refuge in Allah from the devil called Khanzab (a devil that distracts a servant at the time of prayer)?

A: There is no harm in turning the head during Salah seeking refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan when casting his insinuations. Rather, it is desirable when there is a dire need for it on condition that it is done by moving one's head only, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered 'Uthman ibn Abul-'As Ath-Thaqafi (may Allah be pleased with him) to do so when he complained to the Prophet about the insinuating thoughts that Satan casts during prayers, so he ordered him to spit (dryly) to his left side three times and seek refuge in Allah from Satan. He did so and Allah granted him recovery. As for turning one's head during performing Salah without a due reason, this is undesirable. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about this, he said: ﴾It is a quick stealing by which Satan takes away (a portion) from the prayer of a person (By making him glance left and right).﴿ May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him! He is All-Hearing and Responsive.

General Chairman of

the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Da`wah, and Guidance

Where should a person performing Salah place his hands after rising from Ruku'?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 131)

All praise be to Allah. May peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, and Companions! Many people from here and abroad inquire about the position of placing the hands after Ruku` (bowing). Thus, I opine to give a detailed answer for this out of sincere advice for Muslims, to display the truth, clarify ambiguity, and propagate the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). In explanation, I can say that it was authentically established in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that he used to place his right hand on his left forearm when he was standing in Salah (Prayer) and that he (peace be upon him) used to command Muslims to do so.

It was stated by Imam Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) in his Sahih Book of Hadith (in the chapter entitled placing the right hand upon the left one) that `Abdullah Ibn Maslamah reported from Malik, from Abu Hazim that Sahl Ibn Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him) said: (The people were ordered to place the right hand on the left forearm in Salah.)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 132)

Abu Hazim remarks: "I do not know but he attributed it i.e., the report, to the Prophet (peace be upon him)."

It is argued that this authentic Hadith declares it an act of Sunnah to place the right hand upon the left one while standing in Salah both before and after Ruku` (bowing). Sahl said that people were ordered to place the right hand on the left forearm in Salah. It is known that it is an act of Sunnah for the one who is performing Salah to place the palms on the knees when in a state of Ruku`, and to place them on the floor by his shoulders or his ears when in the state of Sujud (prostration), and to place them on both his thighs and knees while in both the states of sitting between the two prostrations and reciting Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) according to what is explained in the Sunnah of the Prophet in this regard. Thus, it is only the position of standing that is not mentioned. Accordingly, it is concluded from the report of Sahl that it is such position that is meant. Thus, it should be clear that it is an act of Sunnah for the one who is performing Salah to place his right hand over his left forearm while in the state of standing up in his Salah, whether standing both before or after performing Ruku` (bowing), because it was not reported from the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that he differentiated between them as far as we know. As for a person who differentiates between them, he has to bring evidence for this.

It is authentically reported in the Hadith related by Wa'il Ibn Hujr on the authority of An-Nasa'i with an authentic chain of narrators that (Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood up in Salah, he used to place his right hand on his left one.) There is another narration also related by both An-Nasa'i and Abu Dawud with an authentic chain of narrators

(Part No. 11; Page No. 133)

on the authority of Wa'il who said: (I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) after he pronounced Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) placing his right hand over the back of his left hand, wrist and forearm.) Such is an obvious and authentic explanation on the posture of the person who is performing Salah during standing up in Salah i.e., to place his right palm on the back of his left hand, wrist, and forearm. There is no difference stated between standing up before or after Ruku'. Thus, it is evident that the Hadith is applied to both cases. His authority Al-Hafizh Ibn Hajar (may Allah be merciful with him) said in his book Fath Al-Bari (a commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari) while commenting on the title of the relevant report: "His saying 'chapter on placing the right hand upon the left in Salah' refers to the position of standing up. His saying 'people were commanded' refers to that it was the Prophet (peace be upon him) who gave them orders as will be explained later.

His saying: "upon his arm" did not define the specific part of the arm. The Hadith related by Wa'il and recorded by Abu Dawud and An-Nasa'i clarifies it: (Then, he placed his right hand over the back of his left palm, wrist, and forearm.) Ibn Khuzaymah and others ranked it as Hadith Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish). The source of this Hadith is found in Sahih Muslim without the addition. The wrist is the joint between the hand and the forearm. Another report will be cited in the last part of Salah Issues but it does not specify the parts of body whereupon the hand is placed either. Ibn Khuzaymah also related on the authority of Wa'il that the Prophet placed them on his chest whereas Al-Bazar's narration states that the Prophet placed them by his chest.

Imam Ahmad stated the same thing in the Hadith related on the authority of Hulb Al-Ta'iy.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 134)

In Ziyadat al-Musnad (a book compiled by `Abdullah the son of Imam Ahmad), it is stated through the Hadith related by Imam `Aly that the Prophet placed them under the navel. Yet its chain of narrators is weak. There is an objection on the part of Ad-Dany mentioned in Atraf Muata' Malik: "This is just a guess on the part of Abu Hazim." In reply, if Abu Hazim did not say: "I but know...", then the Hadith would be still regarded as Hadith Marfu` (a Hadith narrated from the Prophet with a connected or disconnected chain of narration), because the saying of a Companion: "We were commanded to do such-and-such", obviously refers to the person who has the authority to give orders i.e., the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is because the Companions are revealing the rulings of Shari`ah (Islamic law) and then they convey the teachings of the law-giver i.e., the Prophet. This is similar to the statement of `Aishah: "We were ordered to make up for the days of Sawm (Fast) we have missed." It means that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the one who gave the order. It is stated by Al-Bayhaqy that there is no disagreement among narrators in this regard. And Allah knows best.

Additionally, a supporting report is narrated in Sunan of Abu Dawud and An-Nasa'i and Sahih Ibn As-Sakan that could help in determining the person giving the order and the one receiving it. It is narrated that Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: (The Prophet (peace be upon him) saw me when I was placing my left hand on my right hand. He made me place the right hand on the left one.) Its Isnad (chain of narrators) is good. It is argued that had the Hadith related by Abu Hazim been Marfu` (a Hadith narrated from the Prophet with a connected or disconnected chain of narration), then he would not have needed to say "I but know..."

In reply, he wanted to transfer from implicit to explicit expression because without such a comment on the part of Abu Hazim, the Hadith will not be Marfu` but still has the same effect of Marfu`. Scholars state that the wisdom behind such a mode (i.e. placing one's hands in such a mode) is that it is the manner befitting the humble servant who beseeches his Lord i.e., to prevent him from being restless and bring him Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship). It seems that Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) noticed this. Thus, he followed this chapter by a chapter on Khushu'. It was

(Part No. 11; Page No. 135)

said: "Heart is the place of intention and it is customary that when one wants to preserve something, one puts one's hands on it."

It is stated by Ibn `Abdul-Bar: "There is no difference concerning this issue in the reports from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Moreover, it is the opinion adopted by the majority of the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) and the Tabi`un (Followers, the generation after the Companions of the Prophet), and is stated by Malik in Al-Muwatta'. Ibn Al-Mundhir or others only reported that from Malik. Yet, Ibn Al-Qasim related from Malik that he adopted the viewpoint of releasing one's hands. This was adopted by the majority of his followers. Another viewpoint differentiating between the obligatory and the supererogatory Salah (Prayer) is also attributed to Malik. Some of them also hated holding one's hands during Salah. It is reported by Ibn Al-Hajib that this is when one holds one's hands deliberately with the intention to relax oneself." This is a precise and concise explanation of the issue. The statement of Imam Ibn `Abdul-Bar proves that placing the right hand on the left hand during standing in Salah is the opinion adopted by the majority of scholars. There is no differentiation on the part of Ibn `Abdul-Bar (may Allah be merciful with him) between the two cases. As for what was stated by Imam Al-Muwaffaq in his book Al-Mughny, the author of al-Furu' (i.e., Ibn Muflih, the student of Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah), as well as others on the authority of Imam Ahmad (may Allah be merciful with him) that he opines that the one who is performing Salah has the choice either to release his hands or to hold them upon standing erect after Ruku' (bowing), I know of no legal evidence supporting this. On the contrary, it is obvious through the authentic Hadiths mentioned above that it is an act of Sunnah to hold one's hands in both cases. The same applies to what was stated by some Hanafi jurists who preferred releasing one's hands during the standing posture following Ruku`. This is baseless, because this contradicts the Hadiths mentioned above. When juristic preference goes against the Hadiths, this preference will be unreliable as stated by scholars.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 136)

As for what was reported by Ibn `Abdul-Bar from the majority of the Maliki scholars who preferred releasing one's hands, he means by this both cases i.e., before and after Ruku` (bowing). There is no doubt that this opinion is overweighed and contradicts the authentic Hadiths and the opinion adopted by the majority of scholars as previously explained. Both the Hadiths related by Wa'il Ibn Hujr and Hulb Al-Ta'iy indicate that it is better to place one's two hands upon the chest while one is standing in Salah. Both the Hadiths were mentioned by Al-Hafizh as stated above. The two Hadiths are good and have an acceptable chain of narrators. The first i.e., that was related by Wa'il was reported by Imam Ibn Khuzaymah (may Allah be Merciful with him) who judged it to be authentic. It was also mentioned by Ash-Shawkany in his book Nayl Al-Awtar. The second Hadith related by Hulb was recorded by Imam Ahmad (may Allah be merciful with him) with a Hasan Isnad (a Hadith whose Isnad contains a narrator with weak exactitude, but is free from eccentricity or blemish). It was also related by Abu Dawud (may Allah be merciful with him) on the authority of Tawus from the Prophet (peace be upon him) what matches the Hadith related by Wa'il and Hulb. Such a Hadith is Mursal (a Hadith with no Companion of the Prophet in the chain of narration) and reliable. If one said: "Abu Dawud narrated on the authority of `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him): ('It is an act of Sunnah to place the two hands under the navel during prayer,') the reply is that this is a weak Hadith as stated by Al-Hafizh Ibn Hajar in his words mentioned above (may Allah be merciful with him). The reason behind its weakness is that it is related by `Abdur-Rahman ibn Ishaq Al-Kufy, who is also called Al-Wasity. His narrations are weak and cannot be relied on according to scholars. He was judged as weak by Al-Imam Ahmad, Abu Hatim, Ibn Ma`in, and others. The same applies to the Hadith related by Abu Hurayrah on the authority of Abu Dawud that is judged as Marfu`: (The established way of folding hands is to hold one hand on the other hand below the navel.) This is because its Isnad includes `Abdul-Rahman ibn Ishaq. We have just mentioned such a person and identified his condition.

The following text was stated by Sheikh Abu Al-Tayyib

(Part No. 11; Page No. 137)

Muhammad Shamsul-Haqq in his book `Awn Al-Ma`bud Sharh Sunnan Abu Dawud said after mentioning many things in this regard: "The Hadith Mursal (a Hadith with no Companion of the Prophet in the chain of narration) related by Tawus, Hulb, and Wa'il Ibn Hujr all indicate the desirability of placing the two hands upon the chest. This is the truth. As for placing them either below or above the navel, there is no authentic Hadith reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in this regard." I adopt such opinion stated by the Shaykh (may Allah be merciful with him) regarding the mentioned Hadiths.

If it is argued that the following text is stated by Shaykh Muhammad Nasir Ad-Din Al-Albany in the footnote of his book "Sifat Salat An-Naby (peace be upon him)" page (145) in the sixth edition: "I have no doubt that placing the two hands upon the chest in this standing (i.e. standing after Ruku') is a misleading Bid`ah (innovation in religion), because this was not mentioned at all in any of the Hadiths on (describing) Salah though they are numerous. Had this had any origin, it would have been reported to us even through just one means. This is supported by the fact that this was neither performed by any of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) nor was mentioned by any of the scholars of Hadith, as far as I know." In reply to what our brother scholar Shaykh Nasir Al-Din stated in the footnote of his mentioned book:

First: His affirmation that placing the right hand upon the left hand when standing after Ruku' is a misleading Bid`ah is an obvious mistake that no one ever adopted among

(Part No. 11; Page No. 138)

the scholars, as far as we know. It is contradictory to the authentic Hadiths mentioned above. I do not have the least doubt regarding his comprehensive knowledge, virtue, and concern with the Sunnah. May Allah grant him much more knowledge and success! Yet he has committed an obvious mistake in this issue. The opinions of any scholar can be accepted or refuted as stated by Imam Malik ibn Anas (may Allah be merciful with him): "Our opinions can be accepted or refuted except for the sayings of the one who is buried in this grave." He meant the Prophet (peace be upon him). Such is the viewpoint of all scholars before and after him. Yet this neither degrades nor belittles them at all. Rather, they are entitled to have either one or two rewards. This is according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding the Mujtahid (jurist who practices independent reasoning): The one who is correct will receive a double blessing and the one who is wrong will receive one reward.

Second: The one who thinks about the Hadiths mentioned above i.e., the Hadith related by Sahl, and that related by Wa'il Ibn Hujr, and others, will realize that they indicate that it is an act of Shari`ah to place the right hand upon the left hand when standing in Salah both before and after Ruku` (bowing), because there is no details differentiating between the two states so the original case, i.e., placing the right hand upon the left hand, prevails.

The commandment of placing the right hand on the left forearm during Salah was stated also in the Hadith reported by Sahl. Yet,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 139)

it is not explained when to do so while in Salah. If we contemplate what is related in this regard, it will be clear to us that it is an act of Sunnah to place the palms on the knees when in a state of Ruku`, to place them on the ground when in a state of Sujud (prostration), and to place them on both one's thighs and knees while in the state of sitting. Thus, it is only the posture of standing that is not mentioned. Accordingly, it is inferred from the Hadith related by Sahl that it is such posture that is meant. This is very clear.

As for the Hadith related by Wa'il, there is a declaration on the part of Wa'il (may Allah be pleased with him) that he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) holding his left hand with his right one when he was standing in Salah. It was reported by An-Nasa'i with an authentic chain of narrators. Such wording given by Wa'il implies the standing in the two positions. As for the one who differentiates between them, he is obliged to present evidence for this. We have already referred to this at the beginning of this article.

Third: Scholars state that the wisdom behind placing one's right hand on his left hand is that this brings one closer to Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and humility and prevents him from being restless. This was discussed earlier in the opinion of Al-Hafizh Ibn Hajar. Since the one who is performing Salah should observe this meaning before and after Ruku` (bowing), it is impermissible to differentiate between the two postures except when a differentiating authentic text exists, which would be inevitably adopted.

As for the saying of our brother scholar: "This was not mentioned at all in any of the Hadiths on (describing) Salah though they are numerous. Had this had any origin, it would have been reported to us even through just one means," our reply is that it should be said that the matter is not so. Rather, what indicates this was actually reported in the Hadith related by Sahl, Wa'il, and others as mentioned above. As for the one who excludes the posture of standing after Ruku' has to raise the reliable evidence in support of this exclusion.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 140)

As for his saying (may Allah grant him success): "This is supported by the fact that this was neither performed by any of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) nor was it mentioned by any of the scholars of Hadith, as far as I know," our reply is that such a claim is very strange, because it lacks evidence that none of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) performed it. Rather, this is the very evidence that they used to hold their hands when standing after Ruku' (bowing), because had they performed other than that, this would have been reported to us and because the Hadiths mentioned above indicate that it is an act of Shari`ah to hold one's hand when standing in Salah, whether before or after Ruku'. This is what is implicated from the title that Imam Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) gave as we have mentioned at the beginning of this article. The speech of Al-Hafizh Ibn Hajar implies the same meaning. Had any of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) performed other than that, this would have been reported to us. Moreover, it was not reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he released his hands when standing after Ruku`. Had he done so, this would have been reported to us because the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) reported from the Prophet what is less important than this regarding his sayings and actions (peace be upon him). It was discussed earlier in the opinion of Ibn `Abdul-Bar (may Allah be merciful with him) that nothing contradictory to holding the hands was reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Al-Hafizh affirmed such an opinion and we know of no narration proving anything else. According to what we have stated, it should be clear that what was stated by our brother Shaykh Muhammad Nasir Ad-Din in this issue is a proof against him, not supporting him when pondering and considering the rules followed by scholars. May Allah forgive us and him! May He grant us all forgiveness! Perhaps, after reading what we have stated in this article, the truth will be clear to him. He could return to it, because the truth is the sought-after goal.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 141)

Whenever a believer finds it, he adopts it. Praise be to Allah, the Shaykh is one of those who seek the truth and exert much efforts to make it clear and call for it.

An important note

It should be known that the research mentioned above on holding the left hand with the right one and placing them both on the chest or any other place either before or after Ruku` (bowing), is an act of Sunnah, not obligatory according to scholars. Thus, if anyone performs Salah with his hands released and does not hold them before or after Ruku` (bowing), his Salah is valid but he left what is better to do in Salah. Thus, none of the Muslims should exploit the disagreement on this issue as well as similar issues taking them as a means to dispute, separation, and dissention. This is not permissible for Muslims even when it is stated that holding the hands is obligatory as opted for by Al-Shawkany in the book of Nayl Al-Awtar. Rather, it is obligatory for all Muslims to exert their efforts to cooperate in righteousness and piety, to explain the truth through evidence, and to be keen on achieving the purity of hearts and keeping them safe from rancor and malice. It is obligatory also to beware of what leads to separation and dissention, because Allah (may He be Praised) made it obligatory for Muslims to hold fast, all of them together, to the Rope of Allah (i.e., this Qur'an), and be not divided among themselves. Allah (may He be Praised) said: (And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allâh (i.e. this Qur'ân), and be not divided among yourselves)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 142)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Three things are pleasing to Allah when you do them and three are displeasing: It pleases Him that you worship Him and do not associate anything with Him, and that you take hold of the rope of Allah altogether, and that you give good counsel to the one to whom Allah gives command over you.)

I came to know that hatred and dissention arise between many of my Muslim brothers in Africa and other places due to the issue of holding one's hands and releasing them during Salah. There is no doubt that this is Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect). They should not do that. It is obligatory upon all Muslims to advice and debate with one another so as to present the proofs that enable them know the truth within the frame of mutual love, purity, and Islamic brotherhood. The Companions of the Messenger (Peace be upon him) and scholars after them (may Allah be Merciful with him) used to differ regarding secondary matters. Yet, this did entail neither separation nor dissention between them, because the aim of each one of them was to know the truth through presenting evidence. Once it became clear before them, they would unanimously agree to it. When it did not reach the knowledge of any of them, they did not accuse their brothers with going astray, abandon or desert them or refuse to offer Salah behind them due to this. Thus, it is obligatory for all Muslims to fear Allah (Glorified be He) and follow the way of the righteous predecessors preceding us who adhered to

(Part No. 11; Page No. 143)

the truth, religious brotherhood, and turned away from desertion and dissention over secondary matters where evidence may be ambiguous and juristic reasoning may lead to different views.

May Allah with His Most Beautiful Names and Sublime Attributes increase us and all Muslims in guidance and success! May He grant us all sound understanding of Islam and support us to abide by, support, and call others to it! He is the One Capable of doing so. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions, and those who follow his guidance and honor his Sunnah until the Day of Judgment!

President of the Islamic University

in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah.

`Abdul `Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

Ruling on holding the hands and releasing them after rising from Ruku' during Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 144)

Q: Brother H.M. asks about the ruling on putting the hands on each other when standing after Ruku` during Salah and about releasing them?

A: It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to put the hands over each other during standing in Salah. When standing after Ruku`, one is in a state of standing, thus it is permissible for one to put the hands over each other. As for putting the hands by one's side in Salah, this is Makruh (reprehensible) and should not be done because it contradicts the Sunnah. It is authentically established in Sahih Al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hazim that Sahl Ibn Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ﴾They were commanded that a man should place his right hand on his left arm in prayer.﴿ It is stated by Abu Hazim: I know but that he attributed it i.e. the report, to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Thus, this authentic Hadith proves that it is an act of Sunnah to hold the left hand with the right one while in Salah. It is known through the authentic Sunnah that it is an act of Sunnah for al-Musalli (One who performs Prayer) to place the palms on the knees when in the state of Ruku`, and to place them on the floor against his shoulders or ears during the state of Sujud (prostration), and to place them on both thighs and knees while in the state of sitting.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 145)

Since it is only the posture of standing that is not mentioned out of the postures of Salah, thus it should be inferred that it is an act of Sunnah to hold the left hand with the right one when standing both before and after Ruku', because the Hadith is equally applied to both states. This is also backed by what was related by An-Nasa'y with an authentic chain of narration that Wa'il Ibn Hujr (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ﴾I saw that the Prophet (peace be upon him) placed his right hand on the left hand when he was in the position of standing up in Salah.﴿ This includes both standing, which is before Ruku' and that which is after it. Those who choose to place their hands by their sides after Ruku' do not have any reliable proof, as far as we know. Rather, this is against the evident texts of the Sunnah. It is better to place them on the chest, because Wa'il Ibn Hujr and Hulb Al-Ta'iy reported this from the Prophet (peace be upon him) with a Hasan Isnad (a Hadith whose Isnad contains a narrator with weak exactitude, but is free from eccentricity or blemish). They have similar supporting reports. As for the hadith attributed to `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) specifying the place of hands as under the navel, it is judged as weak according to the scholars of Hadith.

Accordingly, you should know that putting the hands by the sides in Salah does not blemish one's Islam or forbid eating from his sacrifice. Rather, such a conduct is Makruh (reprehensible) and contradictory to the Sunnah. Thus, it should not be done. May Allah grant us all a sound understanding of Islam, help us remain firm on His Din, and give advice to Allah's servants! He is the best One asked for help.

Placing the hands during Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 146)

The scholars disputed over the issue of Qabd (placing the right hand over the left hand on the chest) and Irsal (placing the hands beside by one's side) [during Salah; which is correct according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah?

A: It is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) from the Hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr and Shal Ibn Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with them) that the Sunnah is Qabd. That is to place the right hand over the left while standing and the best is to place them on the chest. The Salah of those who practice Irsal is also valid but it is better not to do so. There should be no dispute among Muslim brothers in this regard but it is better to advise one another with wisdom and the best behavior in order to get the benefit.

We have already written a brief article on this issue.

Q: Where should a person place his hands during prayer?

A: He should place them on his chest while standing before Ruku` (bowing down) and after it, for this is the best form according to the authentic Hadiths reported in this regard. He places them on his knees during Ruku` and places them on the ground in a line with his shoulders or ears during Sujud (prostration).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 147)

He should also place them on thighs or knees while sitting between the two Prostrations as well as the case in the first and the last Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) but during Tashahhud he should place his right hand on his right thigh constricting the little and ring fingers, making a circle with his thumb and middle fingers moving the index finger up and down i.e. a symbol of the Oneness of God until he finishes Salah (prayer). He may move it upon supplicating. In some cases, a person constricts all his fingers i.e. the fingers of his right hand indicating with the forefinger, because both forms were authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

May Allah grant us success!

The recommended practice regarding the position of hands during Salah

Dhikr to be said after rising from Ruku`

(Part No. 11; Page No. 148)

From `Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah Ibn Baz **to the honorable brother B.A.`A.**

may Allah grant him success!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I have received your letter dated 17/4/1994 A.C. implying that you often read the books of Salaf (righteous predecessors) and thus you ask about some facts you have read therein especially the information to the effect that it is recommended to put the right hand on the left hand on chest during Salah (Prayer) which is supported by the Hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr and the one reported by Qabisah Ibn Hulb Al-Ta'y from his father. I will send you a copy of our commentary on the view of Shaykh Al-Albany.

Following is the answer to your second question. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said four formulas of Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) after rising from Ruku` (bowing):

First: Rabbana laka al-hamd (Our Lord, to You be praise).

Second: Rabbana wa laka al-hamd (Our Lord, and to You be praise).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 149)

Third: Allaahumma Rabbana laka al-hamd (O Allah, Our Lord, to You be praise).

Fourth: Allaahumma Rabbana wa laka al-hamd (O Allah, Our Lord, and to You be praise).

As for your third question, the ruling on chants has some details; if they are free from any Shar`y (Islamic legal) infringement, they will be unobjectionable and will be of the same ruling as any good poetry. I do not remember that I have ever given a fatwa deeming them impermissible in all cases.

I ask Allah (may He be Praised) to grant you more success and beneficial knowledge and guide you to do good deeds. The relevant authority here decided to send you a copy of the collection of my fatwas and copies of some beneficial books. As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

The General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

and Chairman of the Council of Senior Scholars and the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

Ruling on offering Salah while led by a Sufi who does not clasp his hands during Salah and does not go down on his knees before his hands when prostrating

(Part No. 11; Page No. 150)

Q: If I come to a village where the Imam is a Sufi who does not clasp his hands together during Salah (Prayer) and does not go down on his knees before his hands when prostrating, is it permissible to offer Salah behind him?

A: If he is known to believe in Tawhid (Oneness of Allah) and is not a Mushrik (polytheist), he is only ignorant or follows a few ideas of Sufism but is a believer in Tawhid and a Muslim who worships Allah alone and does not worship or supplicate Shaykhs such as Shaykh `Abdul-Qadir and others, there is nothing wrong with offering Salah behind him. However, the mere fact that he does not clasp his hands together during Salah is not a reason to leave Salah that is led by him, because it is a recommended act, not obligatory.

It is an act of Sunnah to put the right hand on the left hand on the chest. To clarify, the right hand should be placed on the left hand, wrist and forearm. This is the preferable practice and the one reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hadith related by Abu Dawud, Al-Nasa'y and others on the authority of Wa'il Ibn Hujr (may Allah be pleased with him). This Hadith finds support in another Hadith related by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad

(Part No. 11; Page No. 151)

through a Hassan (good) chain of narrator on the authority of Qabisah Ibn Hulb Al-Ta'iy who reported his father (may Allah be pleased with him) as reporting that ﴿The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to put his two hands on his chest during Salah.﴾ Therefore, it is the preferable practice based on the above-quoted two Hadith. Moreover, Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) recorded in his Sahih on the authority of Sahl Ibn Sa`d (may Allah be pleased with him) a Hadith indicating the same notion, although the left hand was replaced by the left arm.

To reconcile the two Hadith, the meaning should be that - Allah knows best - his fingertips were put on his left arm next to his hand. However, although a person that lets his hands loose is not doing the Sunnah, his Salah is valid.

As for going down on knees before hands when prostrating, it is the better practice based on the Hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr (may Allah be pleased with him) in this regard as well as other Hadith to the same effect. However, some scholars view that one should go down on the hands before the knees based on the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) in this regard. However, there is a good range of flexibility in this respect. Thus, the Salah will be valid whether one goes down on the knees before the hands or the contrary. However, dispute is on which practice is better. The sound opinion is that it is better to go down on the knees before hands due to the abovementioned evidence. Nevertheless, if someone goes down on the hands before the knees, it will be unobjectionable and the Salah will be valid. Furthermore, there is no reason not to offer Salah that is led by an Imam who does so.

The Hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) regarding prohibiting one offering Salah from kneeling down like camels does not contradict the Hadith of Wa'il. Rather, they coincide with each other because

(Part No. 11; Page No. 152)

a camels kneels down on its hands before its legs. As for the statement concluding the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah : ﴿He should place his hands (on the ground) before placing his knees,﴾ it is more likely, according to many Hadith scholars, to be mistakenly misreported by some narrators. However, the right order of words is: ﴿He should place his knees (on the ground) before placing his hands.﴾ Thus, the first part of the Hadith would go in line with the concluding part and thus the two Hadith of Wa'il and that of Abu Hurayrah can be reconciled and dispute may be removed. May Allah grant us success!

It is prescribed to put hands on chest when standing before and after Ruku`

(Part No. 11; Page No. 153)

Q: From brother M.M.S., Sabiya, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I notice that some people do not clasp their hands together on chest while offering Salah (Prayer). Rather, some put hands underneath the navel while others put them just over it. We would like that you give us instructions in this regard. May Allah reward you, in sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills)!

A: It is recommended to put them on the chest while standing before and after Ruku` (bowing). This is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr and Qabisah Ibn Hulb Al-Ta'y on the authority of his father from the Prophet (peace be upon him). May Allah grant us success!

The ruling on placing the elbows on the ground during Sujud

(Part No. 11; Page No. 154)

Q: A female questioner says, "What is the ruling on placing the elbows on the ground during Sujud (prostration in prayer)?

A: This act is reprehensible and undesirable, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, (When you prostrate, place the palms of your hands (on the ground) and raise your elbows.) (Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih). The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade us to sit like beasts (placing the buttocks on the heels). Accordingly, it is an act of Sunnah to raise ones elbows for both man and woman in obligatory and supererogatory Salah (prayer) and to lean on hands during Sujud.

The manner of raising the hands

while saying Allahu Akbar during Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 155)

Q: Brother `A.M.S. from Casablanca asks, "I see some people raise their hands as in supplication when rising up from Ruku` (bowing in Salah). Is this in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet? If it is not, what is the correct manner of raising one's hands after Ruku' and other positions in Salah?

A: The correct manner is to raise one's hands opposite to the shoulders or the ears upon Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer), Ruku`, and rising up from it, and upon standing up following the first Tashahhud (sitting to invoke Allah's peace upon the Prophet) with the palms of the hands facing the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah) which agrees with the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). May Allah grant us success!

Places of raising hands

upon saying, "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 156)

Q: Is it permissible to raise the hands only for Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer)? Should the hands be raised during all pillars of Salah?

A: It is an act of Sunnah to raise the hands upon uttering Takbirat-ul-Ihram, Ruku` (bowing), upon lifting from Ruku`, and upon standing after the first Tashahhud, because this was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is not obligatory but a Sunnah done by the Prophet (peace be upon him), his Rightly Guided Caliphs, and Sahabah (the Companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him). It is an act of Sunnah for the believing men and women to do in all Salah (prayers). The general rule is that men and women are equal in the application of rulings except for what was specified with evidence. Thus, it is an act of Sunnah to raise hands upon the utterance of Takbirat Al-Ihram in line with shoulders or ears, upon Ruku` (bowing down) and lifting from Ruku` and upon standing after the first Tashahhud according to the authentic Hadiths reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). All these positions are recommended and acts of Sunnah, not obligatory. If a person offers Salah and does not lift his hands, his Salah is still valid.

The Ruling on talking during Salah out of forgetfulness

(Part No. 11; Page No. 157)

Q: If one talks during prayers out of forgetfulness; would that render his prayer null?

Answer: If one talks during prayer out of forgetfulness or ignorance, his prayer would not be rendered null whether it is an obligatory or supererogatory prayer. Allah (May He be exalted says), (Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error) It is also authentically reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Allah (May He be exalted) said, (I did.) "

It is reported in Sahih Muslim from Mu`awiyah Ibn Al-Hakam Al-Sulamy (may Allah be pleased with him) that he ignorantly said, "May Allah have mercy on you" to someone who sneezed while offering prayer. The people around denounced this act by pointing to him. He asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) about that and the Prophet did not ask him to repeat his prayer. This ruling includes both the one who does this out of forgetfulness and ignorance. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) talked during offering his prayer out of forgetfulness and did not repeat it, he completed his prayer as proved in the authentic Hadiths like the Hadith of

(Part No. 11; Page No. 158)

Ibn Mas`ud, 'Imran bin Husayn, and Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them).

There is no blame in making gestures during offering prayers when necessary.

The ruling on placing Ghutrah (a traditional cotton headdress worn by men in some Arab countries)

under the face during Sujud

Q: A.`A.M. from Al-Khubar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, asks, "I observe some people put the edge of their Ghutrah under their faces during Sujud (prostration during Salah). What is the ruling on this act? May Allah grant you success!

A: If there is a need to do so, such as excessive cold, heat, or unevenness of the ground, one may do that; for the Sahabah (Companions) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so only out of necessity. Therefore, if there is no need to this, it is better to avoid it and place one's face where one is prostrating in Salah (prayer) as the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) used to do. May Allah grant us success!

It is recommended for a worshipper to

to place his knees down before his hands when going down for Sujud (prostration)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 159)

Q: Is it better to put the knees down before the hands when prostrating or the opposite is preferable? How does one reconcile between the two Hadiths related on this issue?

A: It is recommended for the person performing prayer to prostrate placing one's knees down before his hands if possible according to the most authentic of the two opinion of scholars. This is the opinion of the majority of scholars which is based on the Hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr (may Allah be pleased with him) and other Hadiths of the same meaning. As for the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), in fact it does not contradict with the Hadith of Wa'il for the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade one to kneel down like a camel. It is known that placing the hands down first resembles the act of camels, but with regard to his statement at the end of the Hadith, ﴾He should place his hands (on the ground) before placing his knees,﴿ apparently there is a misreport in the Hadith by some narrators and the correct form should be: ﴾He should place his knees (on the ground) before placing his hands.﴿ In this way the Hadiths are reconciled and the last part of the Hadith agrees with the first part and thus conflict is removed. The great scholar Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah confer mercy on him) elaborated on this meaning in his book entitled "Zad Al-Ma'ad".

However, if one cannot place the knees down first owing to illness or old age, there is no harm in placing the hands down first. Allah (Exalted be He) stated, ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 160)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾What I have forbidden you, avoid it; what I have ordered you [to do], do as much of it as you can."﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim). May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on clearing one's throat, puffing, and weeping in Salah

Q: Do clearing one's throat, puffing, and weeping nullify Salah (Prayer)?

A: Salah is not nullified by clearing one's throat, puffing, and crying. It is permissible to do so when necessary; otherwise it is Makruh (reprehensible). The Prophet (peace be upon him) once hemmed while he was praying as a sign for `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) to enter.

As for weeping, it is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) to weep out of Khushu` (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and to draw close to Allah without pretence. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Bakr Al-Sidiq, `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), a group of the Companions and the Tabi`un (Followers, the generation after the Companions of the Prophet) wept during their Salah.

Invoking peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the first Tashahhud

(Part No. 11; Page No. 161)

Q: Is it reported from the Messenger (peace be upon him) that he recited the entire Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second unit of Prayer) after the second Rak`ah of the four Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) Salah or did he only recite the first Tashahhud?

A: Scholars differed concerning sending peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) after the first Tashahhud despite their Ijma` (consensus of scholars) on its permissibility in the second Tashahhud when a person says: I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger and servant in the second Tashahhud of Dhuhr (noon) Prayer, `Asr (afternoon) Prayer, Maghrib (sunset) Prayer, and `Isha' (night) Prayer. He should send peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) as the Prophet instructed in the authentic Hadiths. He (peace be upon him) was asked: how could we send peace and blessings on you? In another narration: "during our Salah". Thereupon, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Say: O Allah, have peace upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as you had peace upon Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. You are indeed the Praiseworthy, the Glorious. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim in the Worlds. You are indeed the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.﴿ This narration is the full narration

(Part No. 11; Page No. 162)

where the formula of sending peace and blessings upon Prophet Muhammad, his family, Ibrahim (Abraham) and his family is mentioned in length. There is no dispute that sending blessings is to be said in the second Tashahhud.

Scholars differed whether it is an obligatory Rukn (essential element) or just recommended. They have three sayings. Anyway, it is permissible for the Musalli (one who offers Salah) to recite this form of sending peace upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the final Tashahhud and then supplicate to Allah with available supplications such as: ﴾O Allah! I seek refuge with You from the torment of Hell, from the torment of the grave, from the trial of life and death, and from the evil of the trial of Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal (the Antichrist).﴿ ﴾O Allah, help me remember You, expressing gratitude to You, and worship You in the best manner).﴿ ﴾O Allah, I have done great wrong to myself. There is none to forgive the sins but You only. Grant me pardon from Yourself, have mercy upon me for You are Oft-forgiving and Compassionate.﴿

This is the permissible Du`a' (supplication) at the end of Salah. ﴾O Allah, forgive me my former and latter sins, what I have kept secret and what I have done openly, and what I have done of extravagance; and what You know better than me. You are the Advancer and You are the Delayer. There is no god but You.﴿ This is taken from the Hadith of `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the end of Salah. (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (book of authentic Hadiths)). Thus, it is permissible for a Muslim before the ending of Salah to say:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 163)

﴾O Allah! I seek refuge with You from cowardice, and seek refuge with You from being brought back to a bad stage of old age, and seek refuge with You from the afflictions of the world, and seek refuge with You from the punishments in the grave.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari in Sahih (book of authentic Hadiths) from the Hadith of Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him).

This Du`a' is permissible in the second Tashahhud after the fourth Rak`ah of Zhuhr (noon) Prayer, `Asr (afternoon) Prayer, `Isha' (Night) Prayer and after the third Rak`ah of Maghrib (sunset) Prayer, and the second Rak`ah of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer and Friday Prayer. As for the first Tashahhud in Zhuhr, `Asr, Maghrib, and `Isha' Prayers, the sound opinion is: It is permissible only to send peace upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) but Du`a' should be said in the second Tashahhud as we stated earlier according to the Hadith of Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) which is related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim). May Allah grant us success!

Taslim (salutation of peace) at the end of Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 164)

This letter is from `Abdul-`Aziz Bin `Abdullah ibn Baz **to the honorable brother A.A.`A. Kh. may Allah grant him success! As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)**

In reference to your Fatwa request registered in the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta' under no. 1221 on 23/4/1405 A.H., we would like to inform that we have studied it, and here is our reply:

Q: Should the Imam end his Salah by saying, "As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) or "As-salamu `alaykum warahmatulla (May Allah's Peace, and Mercy be upon you!)? Is Salah considered Batil (null and void) if he adds the word, "wabarakatuh"?

A: It is preferable to say "As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah" only, as this is the manner reported from the Prophet. Scholars hold different opinions with regard to adding the word "wabarakatuh". Thus, it is better not to say it. However, saying this word will not nullify Salah. May Allah grant us success! Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his Companions.

Q: Should the one concluding Salah (prayer) with Taslim (salutation ending prayer) say, As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) to the right and left side, or only, As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah (May Allah's Peace and Mercy be upon you!)"? What is the ruling on those who add, "wabarakatuh" in their Taslim?

A: It is an act of Sunnah to say "As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah" only. This is the prescribed formula of Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). Accordingly, one should say, ("As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah" to the right and the left side.) As for adding "wabarakatuh (His blessings)", the scholars differ concerning it. It is narrated on the authority of `Alqamah Ibn Wa'il from his father that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would say, (As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh) However, people of knowledge differ on the reliability of the narration of `Alqamah from his father. Some scholars state that it is Munqati` (missing a link of the transmitters). Accordingly, the praying person should not add, "wabarakatuh". But, those who say that regarding it as authentic or out of ignorance, there is no harm on them. Their Salah is valid but it is better to refrain from saying it in order to avoid the scholars' disagreement and be in accordance with the established formula.

Ruling on offering Taslim to one side only

(Part No. 11; Page No. 166)

Q: A man led us in the Salah (prayer) and offered Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) to the right side only, is it permissible for us to offer only one Taslim? Is this act authentically reported in the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet)?

A: The Jumhur (majority of the scholars) declared that offering one Taslim only is sufficient, because this was authentically reported in some Hadiths. On the other hand, another group of scholars declared that offering Taslim to both sides is necessary for this has been authentically reported in the Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also stated: (Pray as you have seen me praying) Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith), and this is the right opinion.

However, the opinion supporting the sufficiency of offering one Taslim only is weak, because of the weakness of the relevant Hadiths cited in this regard and their ambiguous implication. If they are Sahih (authentic), they are even Shadh (a Hadith narrated by a trustworthy narrator, not in line with the narration of other trustworthy narrators in terms of wording, chain of narrators, or both), since they disagree with more authentic and clearer Hadiths mentioned in this regard. But, whoever does this out of ignorance or belief in the authenticity of the Hadiths mentioned in this respect, their Salah is valid. May Allah grant us success!

Offering Du`a after the Faridah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 167)

Q: Some fellow Muslims mentioned that your Eminence issued a Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified scholar) declaring the impermissibility of offering Du`a' (supplication) after performing the Faridah (Obligatory Salah [prayer]). This may be observed only after the Nafilah (Supererogatory Salah). If this is true, please clarify this matter along with mentioning the relevant evidence, so that we may learn more about our Deen (Islam) and the way of our Prophet (peace be upon him)?

A: We know of no authentic report that the Prophet (peace be upon him) or any of his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them) raised their hands while offering Du`a' after the obligatory Salah. Thus, it is evident that this is an act of Bid`ah (innovation in Islam) for the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Whoever performs an act that is not in accordance with this matter of ours (i.e. Islam), will have it rejected﴿ Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith). Also, ﴾Whoever innovates anything in this matter of ours (i.e. Islam) that is not part of it, will have it rejected﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). .

However, there is no harm in offering Du`a' without raising one's hands or supplicating in unison.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 168)

It is authentically reported that ﴾the Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated before and after offering Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer).﴿ The same applies to the Du`a' after Nafilah, since there is no evidence on its prohibition. One may also raise the hands, for raising them in Du`a is a means to having it answered. This should not be observed all the time since it has not been authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) raised his hands every time he would make Du`a' after the Faridah and the Nafilah. Surely, all goodness rests in patterning ourselves after him and following his path (peace be upon him). Allah (Glorified be He) states: ﴾Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) you have a good example to follow﴿

Du`a' is Mashru`,

not obligatory in the Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 169)

Q: Some people claim that making Du`a' (supplication) is obligatory when the Imam (the one who lead a congregational Salah [prayer]) makes Du`a' and those who offer Salah behind him pronounce Ta'min (saying: "Amen" after reciting a Du`a'). Is this true or not?

A: Making Du`a' is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable), not obligatory. Thus, a person may make Du`a' during the Salah (prayer) or out of it. They may ask Allah to provide them with Rizq Halal (lawful sustenance), pious wife and children, to admit them into Jannah and drive them away from Nar (Hellfire), etc. However, a group of scholars declared the obligation of saying: "Rabbi- ighfirly (O my Lord! Forgive me)" between the two Sujuds (prostration). As for the other Du`a's; they are Mustahab (desirable) for a person to make Du`a' at the end of the Salah before offering Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). It is also Mustahab to make Du`a' during Sujud (prostration) in the Salah and out of it, asking their Lord to bestow upon them the best of the Worldly life and the Hereafter.

Although it is Mustahab and recommended, it is not obligatory. As for observing Du`a' that is done by some people after Taslim of the obligatory Salah, where the Imam starts to make Du`a'

(Part No. 11; Page No. 170)

and others raise their hands pronouncing Ta`min (saying: "Amen" after reciting Du`a'), it is baseless. It was not observed by either the Prophet (peace be upon him) or his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet). Therefore, a person should make Du`a' privately whether he is an Imam or a Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), since this was the conduct of the Prophet (peace be upon him) after Salah. But such an act which involves the Imam's recitation of Du`a' in public while the Ma'mumins hands' are raised to pronounce Ta'min out loud after him is a baseless Bid`ah that should be relinquished. It is better to make Du`a' during Sujud and before offering Taslim, because when the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught his Sahabah the Tahiyyat (Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/last unit of Prayer), he said: ﴾Then, let them choose whatever Du`a' they like to make.﴿ i.e. before offering Taslim. He (peace be upon him) said: ﴾As for Sujud, be earnest in making Du`a' therein, because it is more likely that you will be answered.﴿ He (peace be upon him) had also said: ﴾The nearest a servant is to their Lord is when they are prostrating, so make much Du`a' (in this state).﴿ Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith). Therefore, a Muslim should make Du`a' in their Sujud and before offering Taslim. It is also acceptable for a person to do this in private after they have finished Salah and pronounced Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) but without raising their hands, since this act has not been authentically reported from the Prophet or any of his Sahabah. Yet, if one raises their hands occasionally after performing the Nafilah or any Salah other than the obligatory ones, this is acceptable, as raising the hands when making Du`a' is one of the reasons of having it answered.

Ruling on Making Du`a' in the Faridah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 171)

Q: `A.`A.A. from Al-Munufiyyah, Egypt, asks if it is permissible for a person to make Du`a' in their obligatory Salah (prayer) after having fulfilled the required pillars, such as asking for Allah's Forgiveness, Mercy and so on after saying "Subhana Rabiy al-A`la (May my Almighty Lord be Glorified)"? Please, provide the necessary Adhkar (invocations and Remembrances said at certain times on a regular basis) for that.

A: A believer may make Du`a' during Salah at the times designated for Du`a', whether the Salah is a Faridah (obligatory Salah) or a Nafilah (supererogatory Salah). The times designated for Du`a' in Salah are in the Sujud (prostration), between the two Sujuds, at the end of Salah after reciting Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/last unit of Prayer) and conveying blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and before offering Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), as authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he used to seek Allah's Forgiveness between the two Sujuds saying: ﴾Allahumma-ighfir li warhamni wahdini wajburni warzuqni wa `afini (O Allah, forgive me, have mercy upon me, guide me, enrich me, grant me provision and keep me safe and sound)﴿ .

He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾As for Ruku` (bowing), glorify the Lord therein and as for Sujud, strive hard in Du`a' because it is more likely that you will be answered﴿ .

Related by Muslim

(Part No. 11; Page No. 172)

in his Sahih (authentic book of Hadith). Moreover, he related, on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The closest a servant is to His Lord is when he is prostrating, so make a lot of Du`a' (therein).﴿

It is also related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of `Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught him the Tashahhud, he said: ﴾Then, let them choose whatever Du`a' they wish﴿ .

According to another narration: ﴾Then, let them choose whatever Du`a' they like and say it﴿ .

There are many other Hadiths mentioned to this effect. They all indicate the permissibility of making Du`a' at these times within Salah, whether for worldly affairs or the Hereafter as long as the Du`a' does not involve wrongdoing or severing family ties. But it is preferable to make Du`a' of that which was reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah is the One Who grants success.

Making Du`a' for parents during Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 173)

Q: Some people say that Du`a' (supplication) for parents during obligatory Salah (Prayer) is not permissible. Likewise, it is not permissible to dedicate the reward of reciting the entire Qur'an or to grant the reward of Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah) for them? Are these allegations correct?

A: It is permissible to make Du`a' during Salah. There is no harm if a person invokes Allah for oneself, parents, or anyone else as it is recommended for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾A slave becomes nearest to his Lord when he is prostrating. So increase supplications (in prostration).﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) book of Hadith) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Glorify your Lord in Ruku` (bowing) and exert yourself in supplicating in Sujud (prostration). Your supplications will then merit acceptance.﴿ (Related by Muslim) It is related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet told him when he was teaching him the Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second or the last unit of Prayer): ﴾Then let him choose whatever Du`a' he likes and say it.﴿ According to another narration: ﴾Then let him choose

(Part No. 11; Page No. 174)

whatever Du`a' he wishes.﴿

He (peace be upon him) meant was to do so before Taslim (salutation ending prayer). Accordingly, if a person supplicates to Allah during Sujud or at the end of Salah for oneself, parents, or other Muslims, there is no blame due to the general meaning of these Hadith as well as other Hadith to the same effect.

As for granting the reward of Qur'an recitation or Tawaf to someone's parents or other Muslims, scholars held different opinions on this regard. It is better to avoid doing so, for there is no evidence as all acts of worship are Tawqifi (bound by an Islamic text and not amenable to personal opinion). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever introduces anything into this matter of ours (Islam) that is not part of it, will have it rejected.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) In another narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Whoever does an action which is not in accordance with this matter of ours (Islam), will have it rejected.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih Book of Hadith) May Allah grant us success!

Warning against Islamically unacceptable Du`a'

(Part No. 11; Page No. 175)

Praise be to Allah, Alone, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger, his family, and his Companions!

I have examined the booklet you composed called, "How to Invoke Blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him), which is published by some beneficent people. The booklet concludes with a Du`a' (supplication) saying: "O Allah! Invoke blessings on Muhammad in such a manner as may save us through all cases, fulfill all my needs, purify us of all sins, raise high our degrees and achieve all our ends regarding good things while alive and after death, O Lord of the worlds!"

Actually, there is no evidence supporting saying a Du`a' in such a manner. Moreover, it has no grounds in the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). Furthermore, I do not permit anyone to add to my books something I did not include therein. Rather, it is permissible for a Muslim to often invoke blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) at many time in a manner that was authentically described by him (peace be upon him), such as the one in the Hadith narrated by Ibn Mas`ud Al-Ansary (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: ﴾We were sitting in the company of

(Part No. 11; Page No. 176)

Sa`d Ibn `Ubadah when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) came to us. Bashir Ibn Sa`d said: "O Messenger of Allah! Allah has commanded us to supplicate for you, but how should we do that?" The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) kept silent. We were much perturbed over his silence and we wished he had not asked him this question. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Say: Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad, wa-'ala ali Muhmmad, kama sallaita 'ala ali Ibrahima, wa barik 'ala Muhammad, wa 'ala ali Muhammad kama barakta 'ala ali Ibraheema fil-'Alamin, innaka Hamidun Majid (O Allah! Send Your Salah (Grace, Honor and Mercy) on Muhammad and his family, as You sent Your Salah (Grace, honor and Mercy) on the family of Ibrahm (Abraham). O Allah! Send Your Blessings on Muhammad and his family, as You sent Your Blessings on the family of Ibrahim. For You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Gracious) and the method of greeting (i.e., Salam) is as you know."﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih book of Hadith)

Moreover, Ka`b Ibn `Ujrah (may Allah be pleased with him) is reported as saying: The Prophet (peace be upon him) once came out to us. We asked: ﴾We have learnt how to invoke peace upon you; (kindly tell us) how we should invoke prayer for you. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Say: "Allahumma salli `ala Muhammad, wa-`ala ali Muhmmad, kama sallaita `ala ali Ibrahima, innaka Hamidun Majid, wa barik `ala Muhammad, wa `ala ali Muhammad kama barakta `ala ali Ibrahima, innaka Hamidun Majid".﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) This is in addition to many other Hadith to the effect of how to invoke blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 177)

A Muslim should commit himself to things that are traceable back to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and should not invoke blessings on him in such a manner that is not mentioned by the Sunnah. Actually, all good, blessing and happiness in this life and in the Hereafter lie in following the Sunnah. May Allah guide everyone to understand and to stand firm on His religion. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly

Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

Abdul Aziz Bin Abdullah Ibn Baz

Ruling on raising one's hands on making Du`a'

(Part No. 11; Page No. 178)

Q: What is the ruling on raising one's hands on making Du`a' (supplication)?

A: Raising one's hand on making Du`a' is an act of Sunnah (a commendable act) and one of the reasons for answering the Du`a'. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Your Lord is too munificent and generous to turn away empty the hands of His servant when he raises them to Him.﴿ (Related by Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, and Ibn Majah and is classed by Al-Hakim as authentic.)

The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾Allah is Good and only accepts that which is good. Allah commanded the pious to follow the same commandments as He gave to the Messengers. He (may He be Exalted) said: ﴾Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allâh﴿ He (may He be Praised) also said: ﴾O (you) Messengers! Eat of the Tayyibât [all kinds of Halâl foods which Allâh has made lawful (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, milk products, fats, vegetables, fruits, etc.] and do righteous deeds.﴿ Then he mentioned a man who has traveled on a long journey and is disheveled and covered with dust; he stretches forth his hands to the heaven, (saying) "O Lord, O Lord", but his food is ill-gotten, his drink is ill-gotten,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 179)

all his nourishment is ill-gotten, so how can his Du`a' be accepted?﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih.)

In this Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that stretching out one's hands to heaven is one of the reasons for having one's Du`a' answered. However, there is some hindrance in the case mentioned in the Hadith, namely, eating up ill-gotten money. Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would raise his hands on making Du`a'. This was the Prophet's practice while performing Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain), while making Du`a' on Al-Safa and Al-Marwah while performing Hajj or `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) and in many other situations.

However, it is impermissible to raise hands in situations during which the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise his hands. In fact, both the Prophet's practice and abandonment are Sunnah. For example, it is impermissible to raise hands while making Du`a' between the two prostrations or immediately before concluding Salah (Prayer). This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise his hands in both situations. The same applies to making Du`a' after each obligatory Salah. Actually, it is unobjectionable to make Du`a' secretly after saying the Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) of concluding the Salah as there are Hadith to this effect. In such a case, it is impermissible to raise hands as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not do so. Undoubtedly, Muslims should be bound by the Qur'an and Sunnah in all respects and be warned against running counter to them. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on raising hands on Making Du`a' after Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 180)

Q: What is the opinion of Your Eminence on raising hands on Making Du`a' after Salah (Prayer)? Is there any difference in this regard between obligatory and supererogatory Salahs?

A: Raising one's hands on making Du`a' is an act of Sunnah (a commendable act) and a cause of answering the Du`a'. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Your Lord is too munificent and generous to turn away empty the hands of His servant when he raises them to Him.﴿ (Related by Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, and Ibn Majah, and is judged by Al-Hakim to be authentic, on the authority of Salman Al-Farisy.) The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says: ﴾Allah is Good and only accepts that which is good. Allah commanded the pious to follow the same commandments as He gave to the Messengers. He (may He be Exalted) said: ﴾O you who believe (in the Oneness of Allâh - Islâmic Monotheism)! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allâh, if it is indeed He Whom you worship.﴿ He (may He be Glorified and Exalted) also said: ﴾O (you) Messengers! Eat of the Tayyibât [all kinds of Halâl foods which Allâh has made lawful (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, milk products, fats, vegetables, fruits, etc.] and do righteous deeds. Verily! I am Well-Acquainted with what you do.﴿ Then, he mentioned a man who has traveled on a long journey and is disheveled and covered with dust; he stretches forth his hands to the heaven, (saying) "O Lord, O Lord", but his food is ill-gotten, his drink is ill-gotten,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 181)

all his nourishment is ill-gotten, so how can his Du`a' be accepted?﴿ (Related by Muslim.)

However, it is impermissible to raise hands in situations during which the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise his hands, such as immediately after the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers, between the two prostrations, before Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) and during the Khutbah (sermon) of Jumu`ah (Friday) or that of the Two `Eid Prayers. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise his hands on such occasions. Undoubtedly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the best example regarding both that which he does or that which he does not do. However, it is permissible to raise one's hands, following the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him), in case one supplicates for rain during the Khutbah of Jumu`ah or that of `Eids.

As for supererogatory Salah, it is unobjectionable, as far as I know, to raise hands while making Du`a' after concluding it, based on the general evidence on the issue. However, it is better not to be persistent in doing so as it is not authentically reported to be a recurrent practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Had it been so, the Companions would have reported it as they (may Allah be pleased with them) reported all his sayings and deeds while traveling or resident and in all cases. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and may Allah be pleased with them all.

As for the well-known Hadith stating: ﴾Prayer in its essence is humbleness and humility to Allah, and to raise your hand in supplicating saying: O Lord, O Lord,﴿ it is Da`if (a Hadith that fails to reach the status of Hasan, due to a weakness in the chain of narration or one of the narrators).

This is stated by Al-Hafizh Ibn Rajab and others. May Allah grant us success!

(Part No. 11; Page No. 182)

From 'Abdul 'Aziz Bin 'Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother. May Allah guide him to what pleases Him, Amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!) Dear brother,

**I have received your letter. May Allah increase you in guidance! Your letter inquires about the ruling on raising hands during Du`a' (supplication) after Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after the Faridah (obligatory act) or Nafilah (supererogatory) prayer.** We inform you that raising the hands for Du`a' is an act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) and one of the reasons for having Du`a' answered. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Your Lord is too gracious and generous to turn away His Servant empty-handed when he raises them to Him.﴿

There are so many Sahih (authentic) Hadiths reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to this effect. With regard to raising the hands in other situations in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise his hands such as after the Salah of Faridah, this is not Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) on the part of the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) or the person who performs Salah individually.

As for the Nafilah, it is permissible to raise the hands during the Du`a' from time to time, rather than permanently. Likewise, it is not prescribed to raise hands in the Khutbah (sermon) of

(Part No. 11; Page No. 183)

Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer, the Two `Eids, or while sitting between the two Sajdahs (prostrations) or after reciting Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer) before making Taslim, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not raise his hands in such situations. It is prescribed to raise hands in Khutbah of Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain), for the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so. He (peace be upon him) also raised his hands when he prayed for rain during the Friday Khutbah and people raised their hands as well.

The related Hadiths confirm what we mentioned and many scholars agreed upon that.

May Allah help us understand His Religion and adhere to it! He (Glorified be He) is the Best One to be asked for help.

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh

Chairman of

the Departments of Scholarly Research,

Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

Q: A.A. from Riyadh says: Is it reported that the Messenger (peace be upon him) raised his hands whilst making Du`a' (supplication) after offering the Faridah (obligatory) Salah (Prayer)? Some people say that he did not.

A: It is not authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) or his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) used to raise their hands after the Faridah. What people do now when they raise their hands after the Faridah is a baseless Bid`ah (innovation in religion). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who does any act for which there is no sanction from our behalf, that is to be rejected.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith)

He (peace be upon him) said: ﴾He who innovates things in our affairs for which there is no valid (reason) (commits sin) and these are to be rejected.﴿

What is the Sunnah regarding moving the forefinger during Tashahhud?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 185)

Q: `A.H.A. from Al-Dammam says, I notice that some people move their forefingers rapidly or slowly to the right and the left or up and down during Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer). Others raise the forefinger without moving it and others do not raise it at all. What is the ruling concerning this?

A: The act of Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) during the Tashahhud is to hold all the fingers of the right hand and point with the forefinger moving it slightly during Du`a' (supplication) in a reference to Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of Allah/ monotheism). It is possible also to hold the little finger and the ring finger and make a circle with the thumb and middle finger and point with the forefinger. Both cases were authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). As for the left hand, it is to be put on the left thigh with fingers pointing to the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah). It is possible also to put it on one's knee. Both cases were authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ruling on counting the number of Tasbih with the right hand

(Part No. 11; Page No. 186)

Q: M.`A.A. from Al-Kharj says that a youth led them in Salah (Prayer) and after concluding the Salah, he started counting the number of Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]") with his right hand to the astonishment of people. They asked him about that and he said that this was the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). Kindly, guide us in this regard.

A: What the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) did is true. It is authentically reported that ﴿the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to count the Tasbih on the fingers of his right hand.﴾ There is nothing wrong with a person who recites Tasbih on both hands, because most of the Hadiths are general on this point.

Using the fingers of the right hand to count the number of Tasbih is better

(Part No. 11; Page No. 187)

Q: Which is better to count the number of Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]"), Tahmid (saying: "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]") and Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") on the fingers of the right hand only or both hands?

A: It is better to do this with the right hand, for it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do this with his right hand. `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: (The Prophet (peace be upon him) liked to start with the right side when wearing shoes, combing his hair, washing himself, or doing anything else.) It is permissible to do this with all the fingers, for it is reported in some Hadiths that he (peace be upon him) did that and said: (They (the fingers) will be questioned and asked to speak.)

Thus, we come to know that this matter is flexible and should not be taken to extremes or dispute.

The formulae of Allah's Remembrance prescribed after Salah

From `Abdul `Aziz Bin `Abdullah Ibn Baz to those who receive this among Muslims. May Allah guide all Muslims and increase their knowledge and faith, amen!

As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

It gives me pleasure to remind my Muslim brothers that it is of the Sunnah for a Muslim to say after each obligatoy Salah, whether one is the Imam (the one who leads the congregational Salah), Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) or Mufarid (a person who performs prayer alone) to say, "Astagfir Allah" (I ask Allah forgiveness) three times and then say, "Allahumma Anta Al-Salam Wa Minka Al-Salam, Tabarakta Wa Ta`alayta Ya-dhal-Jalali Wal-Ikram" (O Allah, You are Al-Salam [the One Who is free from all defects and deficiencies] and from You is all peace, blessed are You, Possessor of majesty and honor!) If one is Imam, one should turn facing the people. The Imam, those praying behind him, or a person offering Salah individually should say, "La Ilaha Illa Allah, Wahdahu La Sharika Lah, Lahul-Mulku Wa-Lahul-Hamdu, Wa-Huwa `Ala Kulli Shai'in Qadir, La Hawla Wa-La Quwwata Illa Billah, La Ilaha Illa Allah Wa-La Na`budu Illa Iyyahu, Lahun-Ni`matu Wa-Lahul-Fadl, Wa-Lahu Ath-Thanaa'u Al-Hasan, La Ilaha Illa Allah Mukhlisina, Lahud-Dina Wa-Law Karihal-Kafirun. Allahumma La Mani`a Lima A`tait Wa-La Mu`ty Lima Man`t, Wa-La Yanfa`u Dhal-Gaddu Minkal-Gadd. (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone, without any partner. To Allah belong all sovereignty and praise. He is Omnipotent over all things. There is no might nor power except with Allah. None has the right to be worshipped except Him. We worship none but Him. To Allah all favor, grace, and praise are due. None has the right to be worshipped except Allah and we are sincere in faith and devotion to Him although disbelievers detest it. Oh Allah! Oh Allah! None can prevent what You willed to give and none can grant what You have willed to prevent, and no wealth or majesty

can benefit anyone, as from You is all wealth and majesty).

After offering Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and Fajr (Dawn) Prayer one should say along with what is mentioned previously, "La Ilah Illa Allah Wahdahu La Sharika Lahu Lahu Al-Mulk Wa Lahu Al-Hamd Yuhyi Wa Yumit Wa Huwa `Ala Kulli Shay'in Qadir" (There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah Alone, He have no associate. His is the Dominion to Him is due all praise; He gives life and causes death and He has power over all things). After that, one is to say each of the following supplications thirty three times; (a) "Subhana Allah" (Glory is to Allah), (b) Al-Hamdu Lillah (praise is due to Allah) and (c) "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is the Great), and then completes the hundred times saying, "La Ilah Illa Allah, Wahdahu La Sharika Lah, Lahu Al-Mulk Wa Lahu Al-Hamd, Yuhyi Wa Yumit, Wa Huwa `Ala Kull Shay'in Qadir".

It is recommended for the Imam, Ma'mum, and Munfarid to recite these supplications audibly after each obligatory Salah in a low voice without disturbing others. It is authentically reported in the two Sahih on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) (that raising one's voice in supplication after concluding the obligatory Salah was during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) said, "I used to know when they finished the Salah by this (supplications as they were said aloud) if I heard them.")

However, it is not permissible to say these supplications collectively. Each worshipper should recite them individually without observing the voice of others, because reciting supplications collectively is Bid`ah and has no basis in the divine Shari`ah (law) of Allah.

It is recommended for Imam, Ma'mum, and Munfarid to recite Ayat-ul-Kursy (the Qur'anic Verse of Allah's Chair, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:255) inaudibly. After that, Surah-Al-Iklas (the Qur'an, Surah 112), Surah-Al-Falaq (the Qur'an, Surah 113), and Surah-Al-Nas (the Qur'an, Surah 114) inaudbly after each obligatory Salah and repeat them three times after the Maghrib (Sunset) and Fajr (Dawn) Salahs.

This is preferable, for the authenticity of what we have mentioned above. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, His companions, and those who follow him rightfully till the Day of Judgment.

The General Mufty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Chairman of the Departments of Scholarly Research, Ifta', Daw`ah, and Guidance

24/10/1414 A.H.

Reciting Dhikr audibly after the Obligatory Daily Prayers

and the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer is an act of Sunnah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 191)

Q: What is the ruling on the collective Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) after Salah practiced by some people? Is it of the Sunnah to recite Dhikr audibly or inaudibly?

A: According to the Sunnah, it is permissible to recite Dhikr audibly after the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers and the Jumu`ah (Friday) Prayer after the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). It is authentically recorded in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) ("Dhikr was recited in a loud voice when people concluded the Obligatory Salah at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him)." Ibn `Abbas said: "I would know they left if I heard that (Dhikr).") However, reciting Dhikr collectively where one recites in unison with others is Bid`ah (innovation in Islam). It is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) to recite Dhikr but not in unison.

Repetition of some Dhikr

after Maghrib and Fajr Prayers

(Part No. 11; Page No. 192)

Q: What is the ruling on saying, "La ilaha illa Allah wah-dahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu wa huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir. (There is no god but Allah. He is the One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and to Him Alone is the praise. He has power over all things) ten times after Fajr (dawn) and Maghrib (Sunset) Prayers?

A: It is permissible to say this Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) ten times after Fajr and Maghrib Prayers, according to the authentic (Sahih) Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) for every male and female Muslim to observe saying, "La ilaha illa Allah wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu wa huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir" ten times after Maghrib and Fajr Prayers. However, this should be after reciting the regular Dhikr after the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers: After Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), a person should ask Allah for forgiveness three times saying, astaghfir Allah i.e. i seek the forgiveness of Allah, and then say, "Allahumma anta As-Salam wa minka As-Salam, tabarakta ya dhal-jalali wal-ikram. La ilaha illa Allah wah-dahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu wa huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir. La hawla wala quwwata illa billah, la ilaha illa Allah, wala na`budu

(Part No. 11; Page No. 193)

illa iyyah, lahul-ni`mah wa lahul-fadl, wa lahu Al-thana' al-hasan, la ilaha illah Allah, mukhlisina lahudina wa law kariha al-kafirun. Allahumma la mani`a lima 'a`tayta, wa-la mu`tiy lima mana`ta wa-la yanfa`u dhal-jad minka al-jad. (O Allah! You are Al-Salam (the source of peace) and from You is all peace. Blessed are You, the Possessor of Glory and Honor. There is no god but Allah. He is the One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and to Him Alone is the praise. He has power over all things. There is neither might nor power except with Allah. There is no god but Allah and we do not worship but Him Alone. To Him Alone belong all bounties, to Him Alone belong all grace, and to Him worthy praise is accorded. There is no god but Allah, to Whom we are sincere in devotion, even though the disbelievers may detest it. O Lord! None may withhold what You have given and none may give what You have withheld and riches cannot avail a wealthy person with You." It is permissible for the Imam to turn his face to the people but after saying "Astaghfir Allah" (I seek Allah's forgiveness) three times and "Allahumma anta Al-Salam wa minka Al-Salam, tabarakta ya dhal-jalali wal-ikram." This is in following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). After Salah, the Imam may leave the gathering from either the right or left side for the Prophet (peace be upon him) did both. After any of the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers, it is Mustahab (desirable) to say, "Subhana Allah [Glory be to Allah]" thirty-three times, "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]" thirty-three times, and Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" thirty-three times, and complete a hundred saying, "La ilaha illa Allah wah-dahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu wa huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir. (There is no god but Allah. He is the One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and to Him Alone is the praise. He has power over all things)." It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) urged people to do this and explained that it is one of the means for having one's sins forgiven. It is permissible for the person to recite Ayat-ul-Kursy (the Qur'anic Verse of Allah's Chair, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:255), Surah Al-Ikhlas (the Qur'an, Surah 112), Surah Al-Falaq(the Qur'an, Surah 113), and Surah Al-Nas (the Qur'an, Surah 112). It is recommended to recite these Surahs three times after the Fajr and the Maghrib Prayer and before going to sleep according to the Sahih (authentic) Hadiths that were related to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The Meaning of "Dubur As-Salah"

(Part No. 11; Page No. 194)

Q: What is meant by the phrase "Dubur As-Salah" in the Hadiths reported encouraging making Du`a' (supplication) or Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) after "Dubur As-Salah"? Does this mean when concluding Salah or after Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer)?

A: "Dubur As-Salah" refers to concluding it before Taslim and refers also to the period directly following Taslim. Many Sahih (authentic) Hadiths indicated this, though mostly they refer to the end of Salah as meaning concluding it before Taslim when related to Du`a', such as the Hadith narrated on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) when the Messenger (peace be upon him) taught him Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer). Then he said: ﴿"Then let him choose from Du`a' what he loves best and let him supplicate (with it)"﴾ According to another wording: ﴿"Then let him choose after that from beseeching what he likes"﴾ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It is narrated on the authority of Mu`adh that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: ﴿Do not miss supplicating after every Salah (Allahumma a`inni `ala dhikrika wa-shukrika wa-husni `ibadatika (O Allah, help me to remember You and thank You and enable me to worship You properly).﴾ [Related by Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy and Al-Nasa'iy

(Part No. 11; Page No. 195)

through Sahih Sanad (chain of narrators)] It is reported by Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful with him) on the authority of Sa`d ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: ﴿The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say at "Dubur As-Salah" (the end of Salah i.e. prayers): "O Allah! I seek refuge with You from miserliness; and seek refuge with You from cowardice; and seek refuge with You from being sent back to geriatric old age; and I seek refuge with You from the affliction of this world and from the punishment of the grave."﴾

As for the reported Dhikr, the Sahih Hadiths indicate that they are said after Taslim, such as saying "I seek the Forgiveness of Allah. I seek the Forgiveness of Allah. I seek the Forgiveness of Allah. O Allah, You are the Peace and the Giver of Peace. Blessed are You, the Possessor of Glory and Honor." This may be said by the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) or the one who offers Salah individually. Then the Imam faces the Ma'mums. After this Dhikr and Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah), the Imam, the Ma'mum and the one who offers Salah individually say: "La ilaha illa Allah, wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa-lahul-hamdu, wa-huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadeer, la hawla wa-la quwwata illa billah, la ilaha illa Allah wa-la na'budu illa iyyah, lahun-N'matu wa-lahul-Fadl, wa-lahu ath-thanaa'u al-hasan, la ilaha illa Allah mukhlisina, lahud-Dina wa-law kariha al-Kafirun. Allahumma la mani'a lima 'atayta wa-la mu'ti lima mana'ta, wa-la yanfa'u dhal-gadd minka al-gadd. (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone, without any partner. To Allah belong all sovereignty and praise and He is Omnipotent over all things. There is neither might nor power except with Allah. None has the right to be worshipped except Him and we worship none but Him. For Allah all favour, grace and praise are due. None has the right to be worshipped except Allah and we are sincere in faith and devotion to Him although the disbelievers detest it. Oh Allah! No one can withhold what you gives and no one can give what You witholds, and no wealth or majesty can benefit anyone, as from You is all wealth and majesty). It is Mustahab (desirable) for a Muslim to say this Dhikr after each

(Part No. 11; Page No. 196)

of the five obligatory prayers and then say: "Subhana Allah [Glory be to Allah]" thirty three times and "Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah]" thirty three times and "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" thirty three times and then completes a hundred with: "La ilaha illa Allah, wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa-lahu al-hamdu, wa-huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadir [None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone, without any partner. To Allah belong all sovereignty and praise and He is Omnipotent over all things.]"

All this is indicated by the Hadiths reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). It is Mustahab to recite after that Ayat-ul-Kursy (the Qur'anic Verse of Allah's Chair, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:255) and the Surahs of Al-Ikhlas (the Qur'an, Surah 112) and Mu`awwidhatayn (Surahs Al-Falaq and Al-Nas (the Qur'an, Surah 113 and 114)) after each Salah once subvocally except for the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, where it is Mustahab to repeat these three Surahs thrice. It is also Mustahab to say after the Maghrib and Fajr: "La ilaha illa-Allah wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulk wa lahul-hamd yuhyi wa yumit wa huwa 'ala kulli shay'in qadeer [None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone, without any partner. To Allah belong all sovereignty and praise. He gives life and causes death and He is Omnipotent over all things]" ten times before reciting Ayat-ul-Kursy and the three Surahs, acting upon the Sahih Hadiths reported in this regard. May Allah grant us success!

It is preferable to recite, "Allahumma a`inni `ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni `Ibadatik" before Taslim

(Part No. 11; Page No. 197)

Q: Upon concluding the obligatory Salah with Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), I recited: "Allahumma a`inni `ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni `ibadatik" (O Allah! Help me to remember You, thank You, and worship You properly). Then, a person offering Salah beside me corrected me and told me that this supplication should be recited before Taslim, not after it. What is the correct place for this supplication?

A: It is preferable to say this supplication and the like before saying Taslim, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to his Sahabah (companions) teaching them, ﴾Then, let him choose from beseeching what he likes.﴿ According to another narration of the Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ﴾Then, let him choose from supplication what he loves best and let him supplicate with it.﴿ The Prophet (may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) also says to Mu`adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him), ﴾Do not miss supplicating after every Salah (Allahumma a`inni `ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni `Ibadatik.)﴿ The Hadith indicates that this supplication is to be said at the end of Salah (prayer) and it is equally applied to what is said after saying Taslim according to what is reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah (may Allah be pleased with him). He said, ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say after offering every Salah, "La Ilaha Illa Allah, Wahdahu La Sharika Lah, Lahul-Mulku Wa-Lahul-Hamdu, Wa-Huwa `Ala Kulli Shai'in Qadir, Allahumma La Mani`a Lima A`tayta Wa-La Mu`ty Lima Mana`ta, Wa-La Yanfa`u Dhal-Gaddu Minkal-Gadd." (None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone, without any partner. To Allah belong all sovereignty and praise and He is Omnipotent over all things. Oh Allah! None can prevent what You willed to give and none can grant what You willed to prevent and no wealth or majesty can benefit anyone, as from You is all wealth and majesty).﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 198)

It is known that this supplication should be said after Taslim (salutation ending Salah). Some Hadith narrated on the authority of Al-Mughirah and other reports state that clearly. Thus, there is nothing wrong with supplicating after Taslim and after the sincere Adhkar (invocations) of Salah when declared devotionally and subvocally between a servant and his Lord to apply all proofs together. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on cleaning the forehead from dust after Salah

Q: It is said that it is undesirable to wipe one's forehead from traces of dust after Salah. Is there any basis for this?

A: As far as we know, there is no basis for this. It is only undesirable to do so before Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), because it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) pronounced the Taslim of Fajr (Dawn) prayer on a rainy night where traces of mud and water could be seen on his face. Thus, it is better not to wipe one's face before ending the Salah.

Ruling on shaking hands immediately after obligatory and supererogatory Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 199)

Q: What is the ruling on shaking hands after Salah (Prayer)? Is there any difference between supererogatory and obligatory Salah in this regard?

A: The basic principle is that it is permissible for Muslims to shake hands upon meeting each other. Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would shake hands with his Companions. Furthermore, they would shake hands with each other whenever they met. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) and Al-Sha`by (may Allah be merciful with him) said: The Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) would shake hands whenever they met and would embrace someone who came from a journey. It is authentically reported in Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that Talhah Ibn `Ubaydullah, one of the ten people who were given the glad tidings of entering Paradise (may Allah be pleased with them all), left the teaching circle of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Masjid (mosque) of the Prophet to Ka`b Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) after Allah has accepted the latter's repentance, shook hands with him, congratulated him when Allah accepted his repentance. This is a widespread practice among the Muslims during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and after his death.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 200)

Furthermore, the Prophet is authentically reported to have said, ❨The two Muslims who meet and shake hands with each other will have their sins removed i.e. forgiven, exactly as the leaves of tree fall down.❩ Thus, it is recommended to shake hands with others upon meeting in the Masjid or even in a row. If two Muslims do not shake hands with each other before Salah, it will be permissible to do so after Salah so as to put this great Sunnah into practice, reinforce affability and to remove bad feeling.

However, if one does not shake hands with another before an obligatory Salah, it will be permissible for them to shake hands after saying the recommended Dhikr (remembrance of Allah).

I see no grounds for people who proceed to shake hands with each other immediately after Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) of obligatory Salah. Rather, it is more likely Makruh (reprehensible) as there is no evidence to support it, because after Taslim it is recommended to proceed to say the relevant Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) after Taslim of obligatory Salahs.

As for supererogatory Salah, it is permissible to shake hands thereafter if no shaking hands takes place before Salah. However, it will be enough if shaking hands takes place before Salah.

Invoking blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) in obligatory and supererogatory Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 201)

Q: Should one while reciting an Ayah (Qur'anic verse) giving mention of the Prophet (peace be upon) invoke blessings on him and thus act in accordance with the Hadith that reads: ﴾The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) mounted the pulpit and said Amin thrice. The Companions asked him: Why did you say Amin thrice? He (peace be upon him) said: Gibril (Gabriel) came to me and said: ...﴿ **till he said:** ﴾the one in whose presence I am mentioned but does not supplicate for me,﴿ **? Or, is invoking blessings upon him not an action of Salah (Prayer) unless said in Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer)? Should invoking blessings on him be said only in Tashahhud and may not be said elsewhere?**

A: As for obligatory Salah, this may not be done as it is not reported to be the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). As for supererogatory Salah, it is unobjectionable to do so as the Prophet (peace be upon him) would, while reciting an Ayah having reference to glorification of Allah, stop to glorify Allah; would, while reciting an Ayah having reference to seeking Allah's refuge, stop to seek Allah's refuge and would, while reciting an Ayah giving reference to supplicating to Allah, stop to supplicate to Allah.

Therefore, invoking blessings upon the Prophet (peac be upon him) belongs to this category. May Allah grant us success!

Invoking blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) is prescribed in Tashahhud

(Part No. 11; Page No. 202)

Q: A questioner from Eritrea says: "Is obligatory Salah (Prayer) or Du`a' (supplication) in which the Prophet is not mentioned invalid? I was told that neither Salah nor Du`a' is acceptable unless they include invoking blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him). Please, advise! May Allah reward you well!

A: Praise be to Allah and may peace and blessings be upon Allah's Messenger. Invoking blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) is permissible in both obligatory and supererogatory Salah while reciting Tashahhud at the end of Salah after saying: "I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger." One should then say: (O Allah, bless Muhammad and the members of his family as you did bless the members of Ibrahim's household. Grant favors to Muhammad and the members of his household as you did grant favours to the members of the household of Ibrahim in the world. You are indeed Praiseworthy and Glorious.) There are also other formulas authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) any of which is valid. For example:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 203)

(O Allah, bless Muhammad and the members of his family as you blessed the members of Ibrahim's family. Grant favors to Muhammad and the members of his household as you granted favors to the members of the household of Ibrahim in the world. You are indeed Praiseworthy and Glorious.) Another formula is: (O Allah! bless Muhammad, his wives and his offspring as You blessed Ibrahim, and grant favors to Muhammad, his wives, and his offspring as You granted favors to the family of Ibrahim; You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.) This is in addition to other formulas which as authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) are enough for the validity of Salah. After reciting them, one should seek refuge with Allah from four things; Hellfire, punishment in the grave, trial of Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal (the Antichrist) and the trials of life and death. Thereafter, one should say whatever Du`a' one desires before concluding Salah.

However, invoking blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) is permissible in the first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second unit of Prayer) according to the soundest opinion. Although the majority of scholars view that it is only permissible in the last Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Prayer), the soundest opinion is that it is permissible in the first Tashahhud as well, based on the general notion inferred from the Hadith quoted in this regard. However, it expresses a fundamental and inevitable part of the last Tashahhud, while it is only recommended in the first as the Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported not to have recited it in the first Tashahhud sometimes, which indicates that it is not obligatory. Scholars differed on whether it is obligatory or Sunnah (a commendable act) in the last Tashahhud, and some view that it is indispensibly obligatory without which Salah is not valid. This is the well-known view of Imam Ahmad ibn

(Part No. 11; Page No. 204)

Hanbal (may Allah be merciful with him) and others. Other scholars were of the view that it is obligatory in the sense that Salah will be invalid if it is not said intentionally and will remain valid if it is said out of forgetfulness. However, in such case, Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) becomes necessary. Actually, this is a moderate opinion. Other scholars are of the view that Salah will be valid whether it is not said intentionally or out of forgetfulness as it is a stressed Sunnah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked how blessings should be invoked on him. He said: (Say: O Allah, bless Muhammad...) Were it obligatory, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would make it obligatory for them before they asked him and before he asked them to recite it in Tashahhud. Therefore, a Muslim should be consistent in saying it in the last Tashahhud as the Prophet (peace be upon him), whose order entails obligation, ordered it to be done. Thus, a Muslim may not abandon it in the last Tashahhud. As for saying it in the first Tashahhud, it is preferable; however, one who does not recite it in the first Tashahhud is free from blame as it is not a firmly established condition for the acceptability of Salah.

We have discussed the disagreement on whether invoking peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) is obligatory in the last Tashahhud or not. As for Du`a' in the last Tashahhud, it is Mustahab (desirable) and not a condition for the acceptability of Salah. The Salah will be valid and one will be free from blame if no Du`a' is made in the last Tashahhud. Nevertheless, it is recommended to make Du`a' in the last Tshahhud after invoking blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) and after seeking refuge in Allah from the four things mentioned above. This is based on the Hadith that reads: (When any one of you has finished the last Tashahhud, let him seek refuge in Allah against four things; the torment of the Hellfire, the punishment in the grave, the trials of life and death, and the trial of

(Part No. 11; Page No. 205)

Al-Masih-ul-Dajjal.) After teaching Ibn Mas`ud Tashahhud, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Then, let him choose from invocations what he/she desires.) Moreover, it was authentically reported that (He (peace be upon him) heard a person supplicating during Salah without offering glorification and praise to Allah. He did not also invoke peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "He made haste." He then called him and said to him: "If any of you prays, he should begin with praising and exalting his Lord; he should then invoke peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him); thereafter he should supplicate to Allah for anything he wishes.") (Related by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy and Al-Nasa'y and is judged to be authentic by Al-Tirmidhy. It is also related by Ibn Hibban and Al-Hakim through a trustworthy chain of narrators.)

A Muslim is recommended to be keen to adopt reasons for having one's supplication answered, including adopting lawful means for making a living, being conscious, solemn, desirous, fearing, hopeful of Allah's forgiveness and away from sins while making Du`a'. A Muslim should also seek times during which Du`a' is most likely to answered such as the time just before concluding Salah, while prostrating, the time between Adhan (call to Prayer) and Iqamah, at the last portion of night, on Friday afternoon till sunset and the time when the Imam mounts the pulpit on Friday till the Jum`ah Salah is over. And Allah knows best.

Should Tasbih immediately after the Salah be done audibly or silently?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 206)

Q: A questioner from Los Angeles, America asks: "People have long arguments on the way of making Tasbih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]") after the obligatory Salah (Prayer). We ask Your Eminence to show us the best way to make Tasbih whether audibly or silently. As making Tasbih in a loud voice may disturb those who have missed some Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) of the obligatory Salah, what is the solution?

A: It was authentically reported in the the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ﴿Dhikr (mentioning the name of Allah) in a loud voice after obligatory Salahs was a common practice during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him); and when I would hear it I would know that the people had finished the Salah.﴾ .

This Hadith and other Hadiths with the same meaning as those reported by Ibn Al-Zubayr and Al-Mughirah ibn Shu`bah (may Allah be pleased with them) all stress the permissibilty of making Dhikr in a loud voice when people leave after offering an obligatory Salah in a voice that can be heard by those standing near the doors of the Masjid (mosque) and around it so that they can know that people have finished the Salah. If there is someone offering the Salah near the one who is making Dhikr, it is better for the one making Dhikr to lower his voice so as not to disturb the one offering the Salah,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 207)

in keeping with other Islamic proofs. Making Dhikr in a loud voice when people leave after offering the obligatory Salah has many benefits such as offering thanks to Allah for the blessing of guiding them to perform such a great act of worship. Also, making Dhikr in a loud voice teaches ignorant people how to make Dhikr and reminds those who are heedless to make Dhikr. Were it not for this, a lot of people would not know anything about the Sunnah. May Allah grant us success!

Increasing Dhikr, seeking Allah's Forgiveness, and invoking His Blessings and Peace on the Messenger of Allah bring tranquility to the heart

(Part No. 11; Page No. 208)

Q: Three years ago, I complained to a pious man that I was vacillating among the earthly concerns and that I did not feel tranquility in acts of `Ibadah (worship), such as the Salah (Prayer) and the Sawm (Fasting). Although I have been performing Salah and Sawm for ten years now, the enticements of this life are many. The man advised me to follow this approach to calm my heart. He told me to say the following words hundred times: "O Allah! Invoke blessings on our master Muhammad, and his family and Companions." And to say: "I seek forgiveness from Allah, Who there is no deity beside Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting; and I turn to Him in repentance," hundred times, and also to say: "There is no deity but Allah Alone, there is no partner with Him, for Him is Sovereignty and for Him is the praise. He gives life and causes death and He is Able to do all things," hundred times.

Is this correct? Is this the meaning of Allah's Saying: ﴾verily, in the remembrance of Allâh do hearts find rest.﴿ **?**

(Part No. 11; Page No. 209)

A: There is no doubt that increasing Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah), seeking Allah's Forgiveness, and invoking His Blessings and Peace on the Messenger of Allah is one of the greatest ways of calming hearts and bringing rest and tranquility to them, having faith in Allah, and removing loneliness, vacillation, and confusion. What the pious man advised you was good, but there is no specific number of times that you should ask for Allah's Forgiveness or invoke peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him). In fact it is prescribed for you to invoke peace and blessings upon the Prophet as often as possible and should not specify a specific number of times for asking for Allah's Help and Forgiveness, whether hundred times or more or less. There is no basis in Islam for specifying hundred times for this, you should just invoke Allah's Peace and Blessings upon the Prophet as much as possible, standing and sitting, day and night, on road and at home, etc., because Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Allâh sends His Salât (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy) on the Prophet (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and also His angels (ask Allâh to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your Salât on (ask Allâh to bless) him (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islâmic way of greeting (salutation i.e. As-Salâmu 'Alaikum).﴿

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("If anyone invokes blessings on me once, Allah will bless them ten times.") You should increase these things and expect the good. There is no specific number of times that you should invoke peace and blessings upon the Prophet, do as much as you can, whether it is ten times or more or less,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 210)

whatever is easy, without specifying a number of times. The same is equally applied to asking for Allah's Forgiveness, do as much as you can, because a Muslim is enjoined to do so. Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾and ask Allâh for His Forgiveness. Truly, Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.﴿ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾And (commanding you): "Seek the forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance, that He may grant you good enjoyment, for a term appointed, and bestow His abounding Grace to every owner of grace (i.e. the one who helps and serves the needy and deserving, physically and with his wealth, and even with good words).﴿ Seeking Allah's Forgiveness is of great importance, as it was reported in a Hadith Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("If anyone continually asks for Allah's Forgiveness, Allah will make a way out of every distress for them and relief from every anxiety for them, and will provide for them from where they had not reckoned.") It is also reported that he (peace be upon him) said, ("Anyone who says: 'I seek the forgiveness of Allah, there is no deity except Allah, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting, and I turn to Him in repentance,' three times when going to bed, Allah will forgive them their sins.") This topic is of great importance, so you should increase the number of times you ask for Allah's Forgiveness all the time, and say three times during the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), immediately after every obligatory Salah (Prayer): "I seek Allah's Forgiveness." After this you can say, "O Allah! You are the Peace and the Giver of Peace. Glory be to You, O Possessor of Majesty and Beneficence!" The Prophet (peace be upon him) would start after the Taslim with saying these words at the end of

(Part No. 11; Page No. 211)

his Five Obligatory Prayers. So perform Salah and ask for Allah's Forgiveness at the beginning and end of both the day and the night, as this is required. As for saying: "There is no deity but Allah Alone," there is a Hadith Sahih about this, in which the Prophet (may peace be upon him) said, ("Anyone who says this (meaning: "There is no deity but Allah Alone") hundred times in the day, will have the reward of emancipating ten slaves, and Allah will record hundred good deeds and erase hundred bad deeds for them. It will be a protection for them against Satan on that day until the evening and no one will obtain better than this, except someone who has done more than they did.") This Hadith is reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim), from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him). You should recite this statement every day.

It is prescribed for every Muslim to say: "Subhana Allah wa bi-Hamdihi; Subhana Allah Al-'Adhim (Glorified be Allah and all praise is due to Him; Glorified be Allah, the Greatest) often, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Two words (phrases or sentences) that are very light on the tongue, heavy on the Mizan (the Scales for weighing deeds), and beloved to the Merciful are: 'Subhana Allah wa bi-Hamdihi; Subhana Allah Al-'Adhim.'") (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in the Two Sahih Books of Hadith)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 212)

It is therefore Mustahab (desirable) for a Muslim to say: Subhana Allah al-`adhim wabihamdihi `dada khaqihi, subhana Allah rida nafsihi, subhana Allah zinata `arshihi, subhana Allah midada kalimatih (Glory and Praise be to Allah the Greatest as many times as the number of His Creatures. Glory be to Allah in accordance with His Pleasure. Glory be to Allah equal to the weight of His Throne and Glory be to Allah equal to the ink that would be used to record His Words)" three times, because these words have great weight. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (may peace be upon him) one day, entered the room of his wife Juwayriyyah, in the forenoon, while she was in her praying place after the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, and said to her, ("Are you still in the same place where I left you?" I said, "Yes." The Prophet said, "I recited four words three times after I left you. If they were weighed against all you have recited since this morning, they would be heavier. They were: Subhana Allah al-`adhim wabihamdihi `dada khaqihi, subhana Allah rida nafsihi, subhana Allah zinata `arshihi, subhana Allah midada kalimatih (Glory and Praise be to Allah the Greatest as many times as the number of His Creatures. Glory be to Allah in accordance with His Pleasure. Glory be to Allah equal to the weight of His Throne and Glory be to Allah equal to the ink that would be used to record His Words)")

Similarly, the words: Subhana Allah (Glorified be Allah), Al-hamdu lillah (All Praise be to Allah), wa la ilaha illa-Allah (There is no deity but Allah), Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest) have a great position, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("The most beloved words to Allah are four: 'Subhana Allah, al-hamdu-lillah, wa la ilaha illa-Allah, Allahu Akbar!'")

He (peace be upon him) also said, ("Saying: 'Subhana Allah, al-hamdu lillah, la ilaha illallah, wa-Allahu Akbar' is more beloved to me than anything over which the sun rises.")

(Part No. 11; Page No. 213)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, ("The righteous deeds that last are saying: 'Subhana Allah, al-hamdu lillah, la ilaha illa-Allah, Allahu Akbar, wa la Hawla wala Quwwata illa billah (There is neither might nor power except with Allah).")

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Abu Musa Al-Ash`ary (may Allah be pleased with him), ("Shall I tell you about one of the treasures of Paradise? He said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah!" He (peace be upon him) said, "La Hawla wala Quwwata illa billah.")

Therefore, Muslims should say these words of Dhikr that bring peace to hearts and through which all affairs are settled. They should also do many pious deeds, perform Tawbah (repentance to Allah) from all bad deeds, have Taqwa (fear Allah as He should be feared), stand erect on their Din (religion of Islam), and beware of committing sins.

It is prescribed for Muslims to say these Dhikr often and invoke Allah's Peace and Blessings upon the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), as this brings great reward and well-being, corrects hearts, gives them relief,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 214)

and removes vacillation and confusion. This is because Allah (may He be Praised) promises such for anyone who follows His Orders and His Shari`ah (Islamic law), obeys Him, performs Dhikr often, and invokes Allah's Peace and Blessings upon the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) as many times as possible. May Allah grant us all righteousness and protect us all from all the evils of Satan! May Allah guide us all to the Right Path! There is neither might nor power except with Allah!

(Part No. 11; Page No. 215)

The essential pillars of Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 216)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 217)

A Ma'mum's recitation of Al-Fatihah behind the Imam

Q: Is the recitation of Al-Fatihah behind the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) in the Jahri Salah (prayer recited out loud) obligatory for the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), taking into account that the Imam gives the Ma'mum no chance to recite Al-Fatihah as he recites some Ayahs of the Qur'an immediately after those praying behind him say, "Amen"?

A: Yes, the Ma'mum has to recite Al-Fatihah even while the Imam is reciting some Ayahs of the Qur'an after reciting Al-Fatihah, as the Ma'mum is ordered to do so according to the Prophetic Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The prayer of whoever does not recite Surat Al-Fatihah is invalid.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"Perhaps you recite behind your Imam?" We said, "Yes, it is so, O Messenger of Allah." He said, "Do not do that except with the Opening of the Book (i.e. Al-Fatihah); for there is no Salah (prayer) for the one who does not recite it (in it)."﴿ . .

(Part No. 11; Page No. 218)

Thus, the Ma'mum has to recite Al-Fatihah at the pauses made by the Imam in case the Imam makes pauses between his recitation. If the Imam does not make pauses, the Ma'mum has to recite it even during the Imam's recitation, acting upon the Prophetic Hadiths on this topic which are regarded as specification of Allah's (Exalted be He) Saying: ﴾So, when the Qur'ân is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy. [i.e. during the compulsory congregational prayers when the Imâm (of a mosque) is leading the prayer (except Sûrat Al-Fâtihah), and also when he is delivering the Friday-prayer Khutbah]. (Tafsir At-Tabari).﴿ And, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: ﴾When the Imam recites (Qur'an), listen carefully.﴿ . .

Some scholars say that the recitation of Al-Fatihah is not incumbent on the Ma'mum in such a case, taking as evidence the Prophetic Hadith in which Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴾"Whoever is praying behind the imam, then the imam's recitation is a recitation for him as well."﴿ The first opinion is the right one as the Prophetic Hadith mentioned above is weak. If it was a sound Hadith, it would be applied to Qur'anic surahs other than Al-Fatihah so as to bring the religious texts mentioned above to agreement. If the Ma'mum forgets to recite Al-Fatihah, does not recite it out of ignorance of its juristic ruling or out of imitation of those regarding it as not obligatory for the Ma'mum, the Salah is valid. Similarly, whoever joins the Salah while the Imam is in a state of Ruku`, has to bow behind him and the Salah is valid and the recitiation of Al-Fatihah is not incumbent on him in such a case, as it was related in the Sahih Book of Hadith by Al-Bukhary (may Allah be merciful with him) ﴾That Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiy joined the prayer with the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the mosque while he (peace be upon him) was bowing in the prayer

(Part No. 11; Page No. 219)

and he bowed before joining the row of prayers, then he joined it and completed the prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: May Allah increase your love for what is good! But do not repeat it again (bowing in that way).﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for the Rak`ah. This shows that the recitation of Al-Fatihah is not incumbent on the Ma'mum who joins the Salah while the Imam is in Ruku`. The same applies to the Ma'mum who forgets to recite it or does not recite it out of ignorance of its juristic ruling as they both have a legal excuse. May Allah grant us success.

reciting Al-Fatihah during pauses left by the Imam is preferred

Q: From our brother, A. M. S. from Al-Hufuf in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who says in his question: The Imam sometimes pauses before reciting Al-Fatihah in the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud), which enables me to recite Al-Fatihah before him. Does this practice agree with the Sunnah (what was reported from the Prophet) or does it have to be recited after the Imam finishes reciting it? Please give us a Fatwa (legal opinion issued by a qualified Muslim scholar) on this and may Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is obligatory for a Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) to recite Al-Fatihah in all Rak'ahs (units of Prayer); if it is easy for them to recite it during the pause made by the Imam before he

recites it or after it, as this is preferred. If this is not possible, they can recite it even while the Imam is reciting it, and then listen to the Imam, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Maybe you recite behind your Imam?" We said, "Yes." He said, "Do not do so, except with the Opening of the Book (i.e. Al-Fatihah), as there is no Salah (Prayer) for those who do not recite it.") (Related by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy and Ibn Hibban, with a sound Isnad [chain of narrators]) This is also based on the general meaning of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ("There is no Salah for those who do not recite the Opening of the Book.") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim as being Sahih according to a Hadith reported by 'Ubadah ibn Al-Samit [may Allah be pleased with him])

If a Ma'mum does not recite Al-Fatihah due to forgetfulness or ignorance, their Salah is valid, because reciting Al-Fatihah is obligatory on them, but it is not a Rukn (essential pillar) of the Salah. If a Ma'mum joins the Salah while the Imam is in the Ruku' (bowing) position or bending for the Ruku', they have to bow with the Imam and the obligation of reciting Al-Fatihah is removed from them, as it was related by Al-Bukhari in his "Sahih (Book of Authentic Hadith)" that (Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiy (may Allah be pleased with him) came to the Masjid (mosque) while the Imam was in Ruku', so he bowed before joining the row. He then joined the row. After finishing the Salah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, "May Allah increase your zeal, but do not do it again.") The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for that Rak'ah, which shows that he was excused, because he had not joined the Salah while the Imam was standing in a position where he could have recited Al-Fatihah. The same ruling applies to those who do not recite it due to ignorance or forgetfulness, but not to an Imam or someone who performs a Salah alone, as reciting Al-Fatihah is a Rukn for them whose obligation cannot be removed under any case, according to the Hadith Sahih (Hadith that have been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish) on this matter. May Allah grant us success!

Pauses left by the Imam

(Part No. 11; Page No. 221)

Q: reciting Al-Fatihah during the pauses left by the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). Does this refer to the pauses left by the Imam while reciting Al-Fatihah or during the Surah (Qur'anic chapter) recited after Al-Fatihah or the pause left between reciting Al-Fatihah and the Surah after Al-Fatihah?

A: It means that a Ma'mum has to recite Al-Fatihah during any pause left by the Imam, whether during the recitation of Al-Fatihah, after it, or while reciting the Surah after it. If the Imam does not leave a pause, it is obligatory on the Ma'mum to recite Al-Fatihah even during the Imam's recitation, according to the more correct of the two opinions maintained by the scholars. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("Maybe you recite behind your Imam?" We said, "Yes." He said, "Do not do so, except with the Opening of the Book (i.e. Al-Fatihah), as there is no Salah (Prayer) for those who do not recite it.") (Related by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, and Al-Tirmidhy, with a sound Isnad [chain of narrators]) The basis of this rule is found in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) in a Hadith narrated by 'Ubadah ibn Al-Samit (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("There is no Salah for those who do not recite the Opening of the Book.")

(Part No. 11; Page No. 222)

However, if a Ma'mum joins a Salah while the Imam is in the Ruku' (bowing) position or bending for the Ruku', the obligation of reciting Al-Fatihah is removed, because it was related by Al-Bukhari in his "Sahih (Book of Authentic Hadith)" that (**Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiy (may Allah be pleased with him)** arrived at the Masjid (mosque) while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in the Ruku', so he bowed before joining the row. He then joined the row. After finishing the Salah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, "May Allah increase your zeal, but do not do it again.")

The Prophet (may peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for that Rak'ah (unit of Prayer), which shows that the obligation of the recitation of Al-Fatihah is removed from a Ma'mum who is not able to do it, because they arrive at the Masjid (mosque) when the Imam is in Ruku or is bending for Ruku'. The same ruling applies if a Ma'mum forgets to recite Al-Fatihah or is ignorant of the ruling that dictates reciting it according to the opinion of those who regard it as obligatory for the Ma'mum. This is because those who forget to recite Al-Fatihah or do not know the ruling are judged as those who join the Salah while the Imam is in Ruku', or they are worthier of the excuse than them. May Allah grant us success!

Fatwa requests about

ma'mum's recitation of Al-Fatihah behind an Imam

(Part No. 11; Page No. 223)

Q: Scholars have differed regarding a Ma'mum's (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) recitation behind the Imam; what is the correct opinion on this? Is the recitation of Al-Fatihah obligatory on a Ma'mum? When should they recite Al-Fatihah if the Imam does not leave pauses during which they can recite it? Is it prescribed for the Imam to leave a pause after reciting Al-Fatihah to give the Ma'mums a chance to recite Al-Fatihah?

A: The correct opinion on this is that the recitation of Al-Fatihah is obligatory on the Ma'mums, in both Jahri and Sirri Salah (Prayers recited out loud and subvocally), according to the general meaning of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ("There is no Salah for those who do not recite the Opening of the Book (Surah Al-Fatihah).") He (peace be upon him) also said, ("Maybe you recite behind your Imam?" We said, "Yes." He said, "Do not do so, except with the Opening of the Book (i.e. Al-Fatihah), as there is no Salah (Prayer) for those who do not recite it.") (Related by Imam Ahmad with a sound Isnad [chain of narrators]) It is prescribed for a Ma'mum to recite it during the pauses left by the Imam and if there are no pauses, they can recite it even while the Imam is reciting it, and then listen to the Imam's recitation.

This is an exception from the general evidence indicating the obligation of listening to the Imam's recitation.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 224)

However, if a Ma'mum forgets to recite it or does not recite it due to forgetfulness, ignorance, or the belief that it is not obligatory, there is nothing on them and the Imam's recitation will be sufficient for them, according to the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars). Also, if a Ma'mum joins the Salah while the Imam is in the Ruku' (bowing) position, they should bow with him and their Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) will count as sufficient, and the obligation of the recitation will be removed from them, because they did not join in at the time for the recitation. It was authentically reported that (Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiy (may Allah be pleased with him) arrived at the Masjid (mosque) while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in the Ruku', so he bowed before joining the row. He then joined the row. After finishing the Salah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, "May Allah increase your zeal, but do not do it again.") The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for the Rak'ah (unit of Prayer). (Related by Al-Bukhari in his "Sahih [Book of Authentic Hadith]") The Prophet's words: "Do not do it again," mean that he (peace be upon him) ordered him not to bow before joining the row again. It is, therefore, known that it is prescribed for anyone who enters a Masjid (mosque) while the Imam is in the Ruku', that they should not bow before joining the row. They should wait until they join the row, even if they may miss the Ruku'. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("When the call for Salah (Prayer) is made, come to it while walking with tranquility upon you, so whatever (parts of Salah) you catch up with, pray; and whatever (parts) you miss, complete.") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim as Sahih [a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish]) As for the following Hadith: ("Anyone who has (prays behind) an Imam, his recitation counts for them as recitation.")

(Part No. 11; Page No. 225)

It is a Hadith Da'if (a Hadith that fails to reach the status of Hasan, due to a weakness in the chain of narration or one of the narrators) which cannot be used as evidence, according to the Muslim scholars. Even if it is a Hadith Sahih, the recitation of Al-Fatihah will be an exception, in order to reconcile these Hadith.

Regarding the pause left by the Imam after Al-Fatihah, nothing is authentically reported about this as far as I know, so it is an open matter that may or may not be done, In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills). If anyone does it, there is no sin in that; and if anyone omits it, there is no sin in that either, as nothing was authentically reported about this from the Prophet (peace be upon him). As far as I know, only two pauses have been authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him); the first is after saying the Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer), during which the opening supplications are recited, and the second pause is left after finishing the recitation and before Ruku' (bowing); it is a light pause that separates between the recitation and the Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar") for the Ruku'. May Allah grant us success!

a Ma'mum's recitation of al-Fatihah behind an Imam if the pause left by the Imam is insufficient

Q: Immediately on finishing the recitation of Al-Fatihah in the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud) and the Tarawih Salah (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan), the Imam begins reciting the Qur'an without allowing the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) to recite Al-Fatihah, because he does not leave a sufficient pause to enable them to recite it. I read a Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("There is no Salah for those who do not recite the Opening of the Book

(Part No. 11; Page No. 226)

(Surah Al-Fatihah).") **And there is a Hadith that says:** ("The recitation of the Imam counts as recitation for those praying behind him.") **How can the two Hadith be reconciled?**

A: Scholars differ over the obligation of reciting Al-Fatihah by a Ma'mum, but the preponderant opinion is that it is obligatory, based on the general meaning of the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ("There is no Salah for those who do not recite the Opening of the Book (Surah Al-Fatihah).") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, ("Maybe you recite behind your Imam?" We said, "Yes." He said, "Do not do so, except with the Opening of the Book (i.e. Al-Fatihah), as there is no Salah (Prayer) for those who do not recite it.") (Related by Abu Dawud and others with a sound Isnad [chain of narrators]) If the Imam does not leave a pause in the Jahri Salah, a Ma'mum has to recite Al-Fatihah, even if it is while the Imam is reciting the Qur'an, and then they should listen to the Imam's recitation, to act upon the two Hadith mentioned above. If a Ma'mum forgets to recite it or does not know that it is obligatory, the obligation is removed from them, like the case of one who joins the Salah while the Imam is in the Ruku' (bowing) position. They will have to bow with the Imam and their Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) will count as sufficient, according to the more correct of the two opinions maintained by the scholars. This is also the opinion of most scholars (based on the Hadith narrated by Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiy (may Allah be pleased with him) who arrived at the Masjid (mosque) while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in the Ruku', so he bowed before joining the row. He then joined the row. After finishing the Salah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, "May Allah increase your zeal, but do not

(Part No. 11; Page No. 227)

it again.") The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for the Rak'ah (unit of Prayer). (Related by Al-Bukhari in his "Sahih [Book of Authentic Hadith]")

As for the Hadith: ("The recitation of the Imam counts as recitation for those praying behind him.") it is a Hadith Da'if (a Hadith that fails to reach the status of Hasan, due to a weakness in the chain of narration or one of the narrators) that can not be used as evidence, as we are informed by the Hadith scholars. Even if it is a Hadith Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish), it will be regarded as a general rule that specifically excludes the recitation of Al-Fatihah. May Allah grant us success!

Recitation of Al-Fatihah by the Ma'mum

in the third and fourth Rak`ahs

Q: What is the ruling on reciting Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) in the third and fourth Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) of a congregational Prayer by the Ma'mum (a person led by the Imam in a congregational Prayer) in case the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) does not allow enough time for the Ma'mum to finish reciting it?

A: It its obligatory for the Ma'mum to recite Al-Fatihah in the third and fourth Rak`ahs as done in the first and second ones. They should be keen on reciting Al-Fatihah continuously and not miss it. In case the Imam performs Ruku` (bowing) and the Ma'mum has not finished reciting Al-Fatihah yet, it is best to finish it when there remains but a few words of Al-Fatihah. If the Ma'mum is afraid they may miss Ruku`, they should bow for Ruku` and the remaining Ayahs of Al-Fatihah are dropped, as the Ma'mum is ordered to follow the Imam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (When the Imam bows,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 228)

you should bow after him.) Similarly, when the Ma'mum enters the Masjid (mosque) while the Imam is in a state of Ruku`, they must bow for Ruku` and the Rak`ah is valid. This is explained in the Hadith narrated by Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiy (may Allah be pleased with him) (That he entered the Masjid while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in the state of Ruku`. He bowed before joining the row, then he joined it and completed the Salah (Prayer). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: "May Allah increase your love for the good! But do not repeat it again (bowing in that way).") (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Book of Hadiths). The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for the Rak`ah, as the ruling on the Ma'mum is less rigid than that of the Imam and the person performing Salah alone. If there is enough time to recite Al-Fatihah, the Ma'mum has to recite it, but if there is no enough time to recite it, it is dropped as when the Ma'mum comes while the Imam is in Ruku` or when bowing for Ruku`. The Imam and a person performing the Salah individually must recite Al-Fatihah as the recitation of Al-Fatihah is an essential pillar of Salah for them.

As for the Ma'mum, the recitation of Al-Fatihah is obligatory for them as long as there is enough time to recite it, but it is dropped of the Ma'mum in case of forgetfulness and ignorance. Also, it is dropped in case the Ma'mum joins Salah while the Imam is in Ruku`, as the Ma'mum has to bow after the Imam and the Rak`ah will be valid according to the above mentioned Hadith narrated by Abu Bakrah.

Ruling on reciting Al-Fatihah while rising from prostration

(Part No. 11; Page No. 229)

Q: Some elderly people are not able to rise quickly from prostration behind the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) in congregational Salahs (Prayers), so they recite Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) while rising from prostration as the Imam may bow before they finish the recitation of Al-Fatihah. Is it permissible for them to recite Al-Fatihah while rising from prostration? May Allah reward you best!

A: It is not permissible for the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) who is able to pray while standing to recite Al-Fatihah while sitting or rising from prostration. Ma'mums have to postpone the recitation of Al-Fatihah until they stand upright, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to `Imran ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him): ﴾Pray while standing and if you cannot, pray while sitting and if you cannot do even that, then pray lying on your side.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Book of Hadith)

As added by Al-Nasa'y in his book "Al-Sunan" with a sound Sanad (chain of narrators): ﴾If you cannot do even that, you can pray lying on your back.﴿ As for one who is unable to do so, there is no sin on them according to the Hadith mentioned above. May Allah grant us success!

the Salah of one who only knows Surah Al-Fatihah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 230)

Q: My mother offers Salah (Prayer), but she does not know how to perform it properly, as she only knows Surah Al-Fatihah. When I try to teach her, she forgets what I have taught her quickly. Is her Salah valid?

A: Yes, your mother's Salah is valid, but you, as well as your siblings, have to continue teaching her the Salah many times, until the knowledge is firm in her heart. Surah Al-Fatihah does suffice - all praise be to Allah - so if she performs Salah with Al-Fatihah only, her Salah will be valid. However, it would be better if you could teach her some short Surahs along with Al-Fatihah, such as: ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴿ ﴾Say: "I seek refuge with (Allâh), the Lord of the daybreak,﴿ ﴾Say: "I seek refuge with (Allâh) the Lord of mankind,﴿ and other short Surahs. If you can teach her these Surahs, this will be a great goodness, and with persistence and surveillance, she will memorize them, In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills). Salah is valid even if a Muslim does not know how to recite Al-Fatihah and they are unable to learn it. They must recite whichever Ayahs (verses) of the Qur'an are easy for them, even if this is only a few Ayahs. If they are unable to do that, they can say: "Subhan Allah (Glory be to Allah)," "Al-Hamdu lillah (All Praise be to Allah)," "La ilaha illa-Allah (There is no deity but Allah)," and "Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)" in place of the recitation and then say the Takbir ("Allahu Akbar") and bend for Ruku' (bowing), as Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾So, recite you of the Qur'ân as much as may be easy for you.﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 231)

He (may He be Praised) also says: ﴾So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said to someone who had performed the Salah incorrectly: ﴾"Say Takbir and then recite whatever you can of the Qur'an."﴿ and, ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the one who had been unable to memorize the Qur'an, "Say: 'Subhan Allah,' 'Al-Hamdu lillah,' 'La ilaha illa-Allah,' 'Allahu Akbar,' and 'La Hawla wa la Quwwata illa billah (There is neither might nor strength but in Allah).'"﴿

It is never permissible for a Muslim to abandon the Salah, in fact, it is obligatory on them to perform the Salah any way they can, according to their circumstances. But they must try to learn it and have Taqwa (fear Allah as He should be feared) with regard to this. As for the children and relatives of this woman, if they know how to perform Salah, they must teach her and guide her. The same applies to the children and relatives of a man who does not know how to perform the Salah correctly if they know how to, or a sibling. The seekers of knowledge should help those who are ignorant about the Salah, as should all believers, who are enjoined to help one another in Birr (righteousness) and Taqwa. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwâ (virtue, righteousness and piety)﴿ Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾By Al-'Asr (the time).﴿ ﴾Verily, man is in loss,﴿ ﴾Except those who believe (in Islâmic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth [i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'ruf) which Allâh has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar which Allâh has forbidden], and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allâh's Cause during preaching His religion of Islâmic Monotheism or Jihâd).﴿

That is why it is obligatory on you, the questioner, and your siblings to teach your mother and be patient with her.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 232)

You should be kind and use good words with her, and avoid scolding her and being rough with her; use good manners with her and choose the suitable time to teach her, at night or in the daytime. Teach her continually and also your aunts. Try to do good to everyone, as this Dunia (world) is the place for doing good deeds, teaching, cooperation, and being held accountable for actions. We ask Allah to guide us all and grant us success!

The correct opinion is that the Ma'mum should say "Amen" in the Jahri Salah after the Imam finishes reciting Al-Fatihah

Q: Is it right that the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) in the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud) does not have to recite Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) with the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) or say "Amen" after the Imam finishes reciting Al-Fatihah according to the Hanafi Madh-hab (School of Jurisprudence)? If it is, what should I do?

A: The soundest of the scholars' opinions is that the Ma'mum must recite Al-Fatihah directly after the Imam finishes reciting it and say "Amen" when the Imam finishes reciting it in the Jahri Salah. In the Jahri Salah, the Ma'mum recites Al-Fatihah only and then listens to the recitation of the Imam. As for the Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation), the Ma'mum recites Al-Fatihah and some other Ayahs (Qur'anic verses), as the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴿The Prayer of whoever does not recite Surah Al-Fatihah is invalid.﴾ Also, the Prophet

(Part No. 11; Page No. 233)

(peace be upon him) said to his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet): ﴿Perhaps you recite behind your Imam? We said: "Yes, it is so, O Messenger of Allah." He said: "Do not do that except with the Opening of the Book (i.e. Al-Fatihah); for there is no Salah (Prayer) for the one who does not recite it (in it).﴾ (Related by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy and Ibn Hibban with a sound chain of narrators). Also, Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Say "amen" when the Imam says "wala-ddal-lin" (nor of those who go astray [such as Christians]); all the past sins of the person whose saying of (amen) coincides with that of the angels, will be forgiven.﴾ May Allah grant us success!

Ma'mum should remain silent after reciting Al-Fatihah

in the Jahri Salah

Q: A questioner from Tanta, the Arab Republic of Egypt asks: "After the Imam recites Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) in the Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud), the Ma'mum recites it as well, but

(Part No. 11; Page No. 234)

I hear some people reciting a short Surah (Chapter of the Qur'an) after reciting Al-Fatihah. What is the ruling on such practice? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is not permissible for the Ma'mum to recite any Surah other than Al-Fatihah in the Jahri Salah. After reciting Al-Fatihah, the Ma'mum should listen to the recitation of the Imam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Perhaps you recite behind your Imam?" We said: "Yes, it is so, O Messenger of Allah." He said: "Do not do that except with the Al-Fatihah; for there is no Salah (Prayer) for the one who does not recite it (in it).﴿ Also, Allah (Glorified be He) states: ﴾So, when the Qur'ân is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy. [i.e. during the compulsory congregational prayers when the Imâm (of a mosque) is leading the prayer (except Sûrat Al-Fâtihah), and also when he is delivering the Friday-prayer Khutbah]. (Tafsir At-Tabari).﴿ Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When the Imam recites (the Qur'an), keep silent.﴿ Only the recitation of Al-Fatihah is an exception according to this ruling taken from the Hadith mentioned above and due to the general meaning of the Hadith in which Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾The Salah of whoever does not recite Surah Al-Fatihah is invalid.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

silence of the Imam after reciting Al-Fatihah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 235)

Q: Our Muslim brother, A. S. M., from Oman, says in his question: What is the ruling on the Imam pausing after reciting Al-Fatihah to give the Ma'mums (those being led by an Imam in Prayer) chance to recite Al-Fatihah? If the Imam does not pause after reciting Al-Fatihah, when can the Ma'mums recite it?

A: There is no direct, authentic evidence that shows the lawfulness of a long pause made by the Imam after reciting Al-Fatihah in a Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud) for the Ma'mums to recite it. As for the Ma'mums, it is prescribed for them to recite Al-Fatihah during the pauses left by the Imam, if the Imam does leave a pause. If the Imam does not leave a pause, the Ma'mums can recite it subvocally, even while the Imam is reciting, and then they should listen to the Imam's recitation. This is according to the general meaning of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ("There is no Salah for those who do not recite the Opening of the Book (Al-Fatihah).") (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) He (peace be upon him) also said, ("Maybe you recite behind your Imam?" We said, "Yes." He said, "Do not do so, except with the Opening of the Book (i.e. Al-Fatihah), as there is no Salah (Prayer) for those who do not recite it.") (Related by Ahmad, Abu Dawud, and Ibn Hibban with a sound Isnad [chain of narrators])

These two Hadith particularize Allah's Saying: (So, when the Qur'ân is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy. [i.e. during the compulsory congregational prayers when the Imâm (of a mosque) is leading the prayer (except Sûrat Al-Fâtihah), and also when he is delivering the Friday-prayer Khutbah]. (Tafsir At-Tabari).)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 236)

Also, the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), ("The Imam is appointed for you to follow him, so do not be at variance with him. When he says Takbir ('Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]'), you say the Takbir, and when he recites (the Qur'an), listen attentively.") (This Hadith is related by Muslim in his "Sahih [Book of Authentic Hadith]")

If a Ma'mum forgets to recite Al-Fatihah or does not know that it is obligatory, the obligation is removed from them, as is the case of one who arrives while the Imam is in the Ruku', for they bow with the Imam and their Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) will count as sufficient. This is according to the more correct of the two opinions of the scholars, and it is also the opinion of most scholars, due to the Hadith reported by Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiy (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that (He went to the Masjid (mosque) while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in the Ruku', so he bowed before joining the row. He then joined the row. After saying the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, "May Allah increase your zeal, but do not do it again.") The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for the Rak'ah. (Related by Al-Bukhari in his "Sahih")

As for an Imam and a person performing Salah alone, the recitation of Al-Fatihah is a Rukn (essential pillar) of the Salah for them. According to the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars), the obligation of the recitation of Al-Fatihah cannot be removed from them under any case, as long as they are able to recite it.

A person offering Salah alone can recite the Qur'an audibly in the Jahri Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 237)

Q: Is it permissible for the person offering Salah alone to recite the Qur'an out loud in a Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud)?

A: It is permissible for him to do so in the same way the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) does in the congregational Salah, as it was a practice of the Prophet (may peace be upon him), but he should not raise his voice so loud that he disturbs others who may be offering Salah, remembering Allah or asleep. It is worth mentioning that some Prophetic Hadiths were reported on this point.

Reciting audibly behind the Imam confuses others

Q: What is the ruling on reciting audibly behind the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) in a manner that confuses other Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer)?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 238)

A: It is an act of Sunnah for a person praying behind the Imam to lower his voice in recitation, remembrances and supplications on offering Salah as there is no evidence on the permissibility of praying audibly behind the Imam. Also, such practice confuses others who are offering Salah beside him.

The Rak`ahs a latecomer performs with the Imam are regarded as the first Rak`ahs of his Salah

Q: Are the Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) that a latecomer performs with the Imam regarded as the first or the last Rak`ahs of his Salah (Prayer)? If a latecomer misses two Rak`ahs of a four-Rak`ah Salah (Prayer consisting of four units) for instance, is it prescribed for him to recite some Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) after reciting Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) in those two Rak`ahs?

A: The correct scholarly opinion is that the Rak`ahs a latecomer performs with the Imam are regarded as the first Rak`ahs of his Salah and the Rak`ahs he misses and makes up for as the last Rak`ahs, and that applies to all Salahs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾When the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) has been pronounced for Salah, do not go running to it, but go walking with tranquility and pray what you are in time for, and complete what you have missed.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Thus, it is Mustahab (desirable) for the latecomer to recite Al-Fatihah only

(Part No. 11; Page No. 239)

in the third and fourth Rak`ahs of a four-Rak`ah Salah and in the third Rak`ah of Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer. It was authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that Abu Qatadah (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

﴾In the Zhuhr (Noon) and `Asr (Afternoon) Prayers, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite Al-Fatihah along with a Surah in the first two Rak`ahs. He would sometimes recite loud enough to make us hear the Ayah. He would recite Al-Fatihah (only) in the last two Rak`ahs.﴿

However, it will be good if a Muslim sometimes recites more Ayahs after reciting Al-Fatihah in the third and fourth Rak`ahs of the Zhuhr Prayer, as it was authentically reported in the Sahih of Muslim from Abu Sa`id (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite in every Rak`ah of the first two Rak`ahs of the Zhuhr Prayer about thirty Ayahs and in the last two Rak`ahs about fifteen Ayahs - (or he said: half that [the Ayahs recited in the first Rak`ahs]) - and in every Rak`ah of the first two Rak`ahs of the `Asr Prayer about fifteen Ayahs and in the last two half that (of the first ones).﴿ This can be interpreted to mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would sometimes do so in the last two Rak`ahs of the Zhuhr Prayer, which reconciles the two previously mentioned Hadiths.

Ruling on performing the last Rak`ah of the Maghrib Prayer audibly

(Part No. 11; Page No. 240)

Q: A man entered the Masjid (mosque) to perform the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and he joined the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) in the second Rak`ah (unit of Prayer). Thus, he performed the last Rak`ah on his own. Should he recite audibly and recite Al-Fatihah only, taking into consideration that he performed the last Rak`ah of the Maghrib Prayer with the congregation behind the Imam? Should the last Rak`ah he performed behind the Imam be regarded as his second Rak`ah?

A: The Rak`ah he performed after the Imam concluded the Salah is considered the last Rak`ah, so it is not permissible for him to recite aloud in this Rak`ah. This is because the more correct of the two opinions held by scholars in this regard is that what has been performed of the Salah by the latecomers is considered the first part of their Salah and what they perform later is considered the last part of the Salah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (When the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) has been pronounced for Salah, do not go running to it, but go walking in tranquillity and pray what you are in time for, and complete what you have missed.) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Should one who enters the Masjid while the Imam is in Ruku` pronounce Takbirat-ul-Ihram or Takbirat-ur-Ruku`?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 241)

Q: If I enter the Masjid (mosque) while the worshippers are in Ruku` (bowing) in a congregational Salah (Prayer), should I join them after pronouncing Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) and Takbirat-ur-Ruku` (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" when bending for Ruku` [bowing])? And should I recite Du`a'-ul-Istiftah (opening supplication when starting the Prayer) or not?

A: Anyone who enters the Masjid while the Imam is in Ruku` must join the Salah after pronouncing two Takbirs; the first is Takbirat-ul-Ihram while standing upright and the second is Takbirat-ur-Ruku` upon bending for the Ruku`. One need not recite Du`a'-ul-Istiftah or Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) for lack of time. This Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) will count as sufficient, as related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (Authentic Hadith Book) from Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiy (may Allah be pleased with him): ﴿Once he entered the Masjid while the Prophet (may peace be upon him) was in Ruku` and he bowed before joining the row then joined it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, 'May Allah increase your eagerness (caring to join Salah)! But do not repeat it again (bowing in that way).'﴾ The Prophet (may peace be upon him) did not order Abu Bakrah to make up for that Rak`ah which means that it was sufficient. It also shows that whoever enters the Masjid while worshippers are in Ruku` should not bow at a distance and then join the row for congregational Salah. Instead, one should join the row first, even if the Rak`ah would be missed as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said

(Part No. 11; Page No. 242)

to Abu Bakrah : ﴿May Allah increase your eagerness (caring to join Salah). But do not repeat it again (bowing in that way).﴾ May Allah grant us success!

Takbirat-ul-Ihram suffices for whoever fears missing Ruku` and they need not pronounce Takbirat-ur-Ruku`

Q: What is the ruling on hurrying to join the congregational Salah (Prayer) while the Imam is in Ruku`(bowing)? Does one Takbir suffice for both Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) and Takbirat-ur-Ruku` (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" when bending for Ruku` [bowing]) because of shortage of time?

A: It is prescribed for the Mu'min (believer) to walk his way to the Masjid (mosque) with tranquility and dignity, as enjoined by the Prophet (peace be upon him). If one joins the Salah while the Imam is in Ruku`, all praise be to Allah; otherwise, one has to make up for the missed Rak`ah (unit of Prayer). The most correct opinion adopted by the Jumhur (dominant majority of scholars) is that if the Mu'min has realized the Ruku`, he has already realized the Rak`ah and he is excused from the obligation of reciting Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) in the opinion of those who think it is Wajib (obligatory) for the Ma'mum (a person led by the Imam in a congregational prayer) to recite it, based on the Hadith related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (Authentic Hadith Book) from Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiy (may Allah be pleased with him): (Once he entered the Masjid (mosque) while the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in Ruku` and he bowed before joining the row then joined it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, 'May Allah increase your eagerness (caring to join Salah)! But do not repeat it again (bowing in that way).')

(Part No. 11; Page No. 243)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order him to make up for the said Rak`ah, but he (peace be upon him) forbade bowing at a distance and then joining the row.

Therefore, it is prescribed that whoever enters the Masjid while the Imam is in Ruku` must not hurry to join the Salah or bow from afar and then join the row. He has to join the row first and then starts the Salah, even if he misses the Ruku` and thus the Rak`ah. If he fears to miss Ruku`, Takbirat-ul-Ihram shall suffice and he need not pronounce Takbirat-ur-Ruku`. However, if he pronounces both Takbirs he is on the safe side and avoids the differences of scholars on that point where some hold the view that it is also Wajib to pronounce Takbirat-ur-Ruku` in that case. Takbirat-ul-Ihram is Wajib and should be pronounced while still standing upright before bending for Ruku`. May Allah grant us success!

Al-Fatihah is more important than the Istiftah Invocation

Q: If someone joins the Salah immediately before the Ruku` (bowing), should they recite al-Fatihah or Du`a'-ul-Istiftah (opening supplication when starting the Prayer)? If the Imam bows before I finish the recitation of al-Fatihah, what should I do?

A: Reciting the Istiftah invocation is an act of Sunnah (a commendable act) whereas reciting al-Fatihah is obligatory upon the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer), as stressed by sound opinions of Muslim scholars. If you are afraid that you may miss the recitation of al-Fatihah, you have to begin with it and bow whenever the Imam bows

(Part No. 11; Page No. 244)

even if you have not finished it yet, as the Prophet (may peace be upon him) stated: (The Imam has been appointed that you should follow him, so do not be at variance with him. Recite Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") when he recites it; bow down when he bows down...) (This Hadith is agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Q: If I enter the Masjid (mosque) and find the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) in a bowing or prostrating in the Salah (prayer), should I recite the Istiftah (opening supplication when starting the Prayer) or the Istiftah invocation recited by the Imam sufficient ?

A: If you find the Imam in a bowing or prostrating, you must immediately begin the Salah by saying, Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest) and join him in the Salah. There is no need to recite the Istiftah innvocation.

What must a Ma'mum do

when entering the Masjid (mosque) while the Imam is in Ruku`

Q: If the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) enters the Masjid while the Imam is in Ruku` (bowing), should they pronounce Takbir of Iftitah (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon the start of Salah) and Takbir of Ruku` or just one Takbir and then bow ?

A: It is preferable and better to pronounce Takbir twice; the first is Takbirat-ul-Ihram which is an essential pillar of the Salah that the Ma'mum must say while still standing upright

(Part No. 11; Page No. 245)

and the second is Takbirat-ul-Ruku` which Ma'mums should say before bowing. If one fears missing the Rak`ah (unit), one need not say Takbirat-ul-Ruku` and Takbirat-ul-Ihram will be sufficient, as held by the majority of the Muslim scholars. This is because the two takbirs are two acts of worship that are to be done at the same time, so Takbirat-ul-Ihram is given priority over Takbirat-ul-Ruku` and the Rak`ah performed is correct, as held by most Muslim scholars. As related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Book of Hadith from Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiyy (may Allah be pleased with him) ﴾That he came to the Prophet (may peace be upon him) in the Masjid while he (may peace be upon him) was bowing in the Salah and he bowed before joining the row mentioned, then he joined it. The Prophet (may peace be upon him) said to him: May Allah increase your love for the good! But do not repeat it again (bowing in that way).﴿ This means that the Prophet (may peace be upon him) ordered him not to bow at a distance and then join the ranks to complete the Salah. When one enters the Masjid, one should not bow until they stand in the row. The Prophet (may peace be upon him) did not order him to perform the Rak`ah again, so the Salah was correct and was exempted from reciting Al-Fatihah as he did not arrive on time. This is the most preponderant opinion adopted by those who hold that it is obligatory for the Ma'mum to recite Al-Fatihah.

What latecomers should do when

joining the Salah while the Imam is in Ruku`

Q: When a latecomer joins the Salah (the Prayer) while the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) is in Ruku' (bowing), what should he do? Is realizing the Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) conditional upon saying "Subhana Rabi Al-`Azim (Glory be to my Lord, the Greatest)" before the Imam rises from Ruku`?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 246)

A: If the Ma'mum (a person being led by an Imam in Prayer) joins the Salah while the Imam is in a state of Ruku`, he realizes the Rak`ah even if he does not say "Subhana Rabi Al-`Azim except after the Imam rises from Ruku`. This is understood by the general meaning of the Prophetic Hadith in which the Prophet (may peace be upon him) stated: (Whoever realizes one Rak`ah (in congregation) has realized the full reward of the prayer (in congregation).) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih Book of Hadith) .

It is well-known that the Rak`ah is counted by completing the Ruku`, according to what was related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih Book of Hadith from Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafiyy (may Allah be pleased with him) (That he came to the Prophet (may peace be upon him) in the Masjid (mosque) while he (may peace be upon him) was bowing in the Salah and he bowed before joining the ranks. The Prophet (may peace be upon him) said to him: May Allah increase your love for the good! But do not repeat it again (bowing in that manner).) The Prophet (may peace be upon him) did not order him to perform that Rak`ah again, but he (may peace be upon him) forbade him to bow before joining the row. Thus, latecomers should not bow before they join the ranks with those performing the Salah.

It is lawful for the Imam to prolong Ruku`

so that latecomers can join the Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 247)

Q: Some Imams of Masjids (mosques) may prolong their bowing so that those who are late can join them in the Salah (prayer). Others say that such practice is not permissible? What is the correct ruling on this case, may Allah grant you success!

A: It is legally permissible for the Imam to prolong his bowing briefly so that those who are late for the Salah can join him. This act follows in the footsteps of the Prophet (may peace be upon him).

It is preferable for the Imam to lengthen the Ruku`

when hearing someone entering the Masjid to join the Salah

Q: If the Imam is in Ruku' (bowing) and hears some people entering to join the Salah (prayer), is it be permissible for him to prolong bowing?

A: It is preferable for the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) not to rise from bowing quickly in such case, but he should not tire those who are performing the Salah behind him.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 248)

This will allow those who are late to join the Salah while he is still in bowing position. There is evidence reported from the Prophet (may peace be upon him) that he regarded this practice as desirable.

The Ruling on the Salah of a person who made Taslim before finishing the last Tashahhud behind the Imam

Q: It is well-known that the last Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the last unit of Salah) is one of the essential pillars of Salah. Once, the Imam made Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) before I finished the recitation of the last Tashahhud. Should I have performed this Salah again ?

A: You must finish the last Tashahhud even if you delay a bit after the Imam concludes the Salah. This is because the last Tashahhud is an essential pillar of the Salah as per the majority of Muslim scholars. It is worth mentioning that a Muslim also offers blessings on the Prophet (may peace be upon him) in the last Tashahhud.

It is obligatory for a Muslim to finish the last Tashahhud even he has to be a bit late after the Imam concludes the Salam. The Tashahhud includes invoking Allah saying " (O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the torment of the Hell-fire, from the punishment of the grave, from the afflictions of life and death, and from the afflictions of the imposter-Messiah." This is because the Prophet (may peace be upon him) ordered Muslims to seek refuge in Allah from the four things mentioned above during the recitation of the last Tashahhud. Some Muslim scholars view this as obligatory upon a Muslim to do. May Allah grant us success!

(Part No. 11; Page No. 249)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 250)

Sujud-ul-Sahw

(Part No. 11; Page No. 251)

Ruling when in doubt about the number of Rak'ahs preformed during a Salah

Q: During a four-Rak'ah Salah (Prayer consisting of four units), an Imam was doubtful and did not know whether he had performed three or four Rak'ahs. When he concluded the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), he was informed by the Ma'mums (those praying behind an Imam) that he had only performed three Rak'ahs. Should the Imam get up and say the Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) for the fourth Rak'ah or just get up and recite Al-Fatihah without saying the Takbir? As for Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness), should it be performed before the Taslim or after it?

A: If the Imam or someone performing a four-Rak'ah Salah alone is in doubt about the number of Rak'ahs, and does not know whether they have performed three or four, it is obligatory on them to base their Salah on what they are sure of, which is the lower number. They should consider that they have performed three Rak'ahs and perform a fourth. They should then perform the Sujud-ul-Sahw before the Taslim. This was authentically reported by Abu Sa'id Al-Khudary, who said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ("If any of you doubts during their Salah and does not know whether they have performed three or four (Rak'ahs), they should cast aside their doubts and build on what they are sure of. Then they should perform two prostrations before offering Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). If the Rak'ah they have prayed is the fifth, they (the two prostrations) will make their Salah of an even number of Rak'ahs; and if by praying it they have completed four Rak'ahs, they (the two prostrations) will be vexing humiliation for Satan.") (Related by Muslim in his "Sahih [Book of Authentic Hadith]")

(Part No. 11; Page No. 252)

If the Imam performs the Taslim after performing three Rak'ahs and he is then informed of this, he has to get up without saying Takbir, with the intention of completing the Salah and perform the fourth Rak'ah. He should then sit for the Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer). After finishing the Tashahhud, invoking peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him), and supplicating, he performs the Taslim and then two prostrations of forgetfulness and another Taslim. This is what is preferred for everyone who inattentively performs Taslim following a deficient Salah, because it was authentically reported that (The Prophet (peace be upon him) performed Taslim after offering two Rak'ahs only (instead of four) in the Zhuhr (Noon) or 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer. Dhu Al-Yadayn informed him and so he (peace be upon him) rose and completed the Salah. He then performed the Taslim, Sujud-ul-Sahw, and then the Taslim.) It was also authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that (He (peace be upon him) performed Taslim after three Rak'ahs in the 'Asr Prayer. When he was told about it, he performed a fourth, said Taslim, performed two prostrations of forgetfulness, and then another Taslim.)

The Ruling on a person who offered Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness)

thinking that the Imam had prostrated but the Imam had already started an extra Rak`ah

Q: Once, we were performing the Maghrib Salah (Sunset Prayer) in congregation when the Imam said, "Allahu Akbar," after the last Tashahhud in the third Rak`ah (unit) and rose to offer an additional Rak`ah out of forgetfulness. Some people behind him thought that he was performing a prostration of forgetfulness, so they prostrated. When they rose

from prostration, they noticed that the Imam was sitting after some people said to him, "Subhana Allah," to remind him, so he sat and offered two prostrations of forgetfulness.

After concluding the Salah, some people found that they had offered three prostrations of forgetfulness. What is the ruling on such Salah? What is the ruling on the third prostration of forgetfulness that some people did behind the Imam? A: There is no sin on a person who prostrated thinking that the Imam was offering two prostrations of forgetfulness. Their Salah is valid as they did not intend to offer anything extra in the Salah. Also, they prostrated only to follow the Imam as they thought.

The Ruling on the Salah of a person who doubted whether they recited Surah Al-Fatihah or not

Q: Sometimes during my Salah (prayer) I become unsure whether I have recited Surah Al-Fatihah (the Opening Chapter of the Holy Qur'an) or not; should I offer two prostrations of forgetfulness? What should I recite in these two prostrations of forgetfulness? If it is probable that I have recited it, should I offer the two prostrations of forgetfulness?

A: If a person performing Salah alone or with the Imam in congregational is unsure whether he has recited Surah Al-Fatihah or not, he has to recite it again before bowing and offer two prostrations of forgetfulness before concluding the Salah. If

(Part No. 11; Page No. 254)

they are in doubt after finishing the Salah, their Salah is valid and they should pay no attention to such doubt, as the Salah is basically correct unless there is hard evidence that it is incorrect. As for those praying behind the Imam, their Salah is correct even if they forgot to recite Surah Al-Fatihah as the recitation of the Imam will be sufficient for them like one who does not recite Surah Al-Fatihah out of ignorance and the one who joins the congregational Salah while the Imam is bowing. In case someone joins the Salah while the Imam is bowing, they should say "Takbir" (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") while they are upright and then bow. One is exempted from reciting Surah Al-Fatihah if one has not completed it with the Imam while he was standing for recitation, as mentioned in the Prophetic Hadith narrated by Abu Bakrah in this regard.

As for the prostration of forgetfulness, a Muslim may recite the same supplications recited in the ordinary prostration of Salah. One can say, "Subhana Rabi Al-A`la (Glory be to Allah, the Almighty)" and other words of praise. May Allah grant us success!

The Ruling on the Salah of a person who doubts

making Takbirat-ul-Ihram and reciting Al-Fatihah

Q: My problem is that when I enter the Masjid (mosque), I face the Qiblah (direction of prayer) and perform Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer). However, I often doubt whether I have made this Takbirah or not, so I make it again. Then, I recite Al-Fatihah (the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) but I forget whether I recited it or not, so I recite it again; particularly when I perform the Salah behind an Imam. Is my Salah correct? What should I do to avoid forgetfulness in the Salah? Please advise , may Allah reward you!

(Part No. 11; Page No. 255)

A: According to what you have mentioned above, your Salah is correct, but your should fight the devilish whispers by recalling Allah's Glory to your mind and heart when you start the Salah. Also, you have to seek refuge with Allah from the Accursed Satan. Consequently, all whispers will vanish In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills) and you will defeat the Satan and please your Lord (Exalted be He).

What should a person do upon doubting whether he performed Salah or not?

Q: When a person doubts whether he has performed Salah or not, what should one do when this takes place before or after the specified time for Salah?

A: When a Muslim is doubtful about performing a specific obligatory Salah, it is obligatory for him to hasten to perform it, because the obligation essentially exists so it should be fulfilled. Thus, it is obligatory for him to hasten to perform it, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: (Whoever misses a prayer because he sleeps or forgets it should offer it when he remembers it, there is no expiation for it except this.)

It is obligatory upon a Muslim to pay much attention to Salah and

(Part No. 11; Page No. 256)

to be keen to perform it in congregation and should not busy oneself with what distracts one from it, because it is the pillar of Islam as well as the most important religious obligation after the Two Declarations of Faith. Allah (may He be Praised) says: (Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayers)].)

Allah (Exalted be He) also says: (And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with Ar-Raki'ûn.)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (The peak of the matter is Islam; the pillar is Salah; and its topmost part is Jihad (Fighting/Struggling in the Cause of Allah).) He (peace be upon him) said: (Islam was based on five pillars: testimony that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; performing Salah (prayers), giving Zakah; fasting Ramadan; and performing Hajj (pilgrimage).) There are many Ayahs and Hadiths which speak of the importance of Salah and that it is obligatory to observe them.

Satanic insinuations and doubts during Salah

Q: A sister asks saying: Doubts haunt me regarding the number of Rak`ahs I have already performed. I attempt to recite out loud so as to remember what I recited, yet doubts obsess me. Upon finishing Salah, I feel as if I have missed a Ruku` (bowing), Sujud (Prostration), or sitting to recite Tashah-hud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer). Though being very keen to avoid skepticism in Salah, this turns out to be of no avail. Thus, I hope that you will guide me to what I should do in this regard. Am I obliged to re-perform my Salah when I am skeptical? Is there a certain supplication that I could say at the beginning of my Salah so as to get rid of doubts?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 257)

A: You have to strive against and beware of such Satanic insinuations. Repeat seeking refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan, because Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾Say: "I seek refuge with (Allâh) the Lord of mankind,﴿ ﴾"The King of mankind -﴿ ﴾"The Ilâh (God) of mankind,﴿ ﴾"From the evil of the whisperer (devil who whispers evil in the hearts of men) who withdraws (from his whispering in one's heart after one remembers Allâh).﴿

Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaitân (Satan), then seek refuge with Allâh. Verily, He is All-Hearer, All-Knower.﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 258)

When doubts attack you shortly after performing Salah (prayer) or Wudu' (ablution), then turn away from and pay no attention to them. Be sure that both your Salah (prayer) and Wudu' (ablution) are valid. If doubts haunt you during performing Salah whether you have performed three or four Rak'ahs (units of Prayer), then consider that you have just performed three Rak'ahs (units of Prayer), complete the Salah, and then perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) twice before saying Taslim (Final salutation: Saying, "Al-Salam 'Alaykum [Peace be upon you]" upon ending Prayer), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered such a person who happened to forget something in Salah to do what we have just mentioned. May Allah protect all of us from Satan!

Treatment of Waswasah while offering Salah

Q: When I intend to offer Salah (Prayer), some kind of Waswasah (insinuating or distracting thoughts instigated by Satan) and suspicions preoccupy my mind that sometimes I no longer know what I have recited or the number of Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) I offered. Please guide me. What should I do?

A: It is prescribed for those offering Salah, men and women, to enter into Salah attentive and humbly submissive to Allah, calling to their mind that they are standing before their Lord, to drive away Satan and decrease Satanic incitements. This is to act upon Allah's Saying (may He be Praised):

(Part No. 11; Page No. 259)

﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ Once insinuations are repeated, it is prescribed that one should seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan. Even when this takes place during Salah, the praying person should then spit dryly to their left side three times and seek refuge with Allah from Satan three times, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded 'Uthman ibn Abul-'Aas to do so when the latter told the Prophet (peace be upon him) that Satan made him doubt his Salah. If a person who is performing Salah is not sure about the number of Rak'ahs they performed, then they should base their Salah upon the lesser actions they have performed which they are certain about. They should continue completing their Salah and then perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) twice before concluding Salah with Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), because Abu Sa'id (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾If any of you doubts during their Salah and does not know whether they have performed three or four (Rak'ahs), they should cast aside their doubts and build on what they are sure of. Then they should perform two prostrations before offering Taslim. If the Rak'ah they have prayed is the fifth, they (the two prostrations) will make their Salah of an even number of Rak'ahs; and if by praying it they have completed four Rak'ahs, they (the two prostrations) will cause chagrin to Satan.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) Allah is the One Who grants success!

Ruling on repeating Salah when occupied by many distracting thoughts

(Part No. 11; Page No. 260)

Q: A sister from Buraydah, the United Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, asks: When I intend to perform Salah, my mind wanders, many thoughts haunt me, and I become unaware of what I am saying until performing Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). Re-performing Salah makes no difference as I forget to recite the first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second unit of Prayer) and I do not know how many Rak'ahs I have performed, which increases my disturbance and fear of Allah. Thus, I perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness). Please, give me your Fatwa about this. May Allah reward you with the best! Thank you very much!

A: Waswasah (insinuating or distracting thoughts) are from Satan. You have to pay attention to your Salah, focus on it, and be tranquil during it in order to perform it as it should be with awareness. Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man who was not praying properly and was not calm and unhurried while performing Salah, he told him to repeat it and said to him: ﴾When you stand for praying, perform Wudu' (ablution) perfectly, and then face the Qiblah (Ka'bah-direction faced for Prayer) and say Takbir ("Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"). Then recite of what you know of the Qur'an, then bow until you are tranquil in bowing, then rise (from bowing) until you stand straight.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 261)

Then prostrate until you are tranquil in prostration, then sit up until you are tranquil in sitting, and do that throughout your whole Salah.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

If you bear in mind that when you are performing Salah you are standing in the presence of Allah and conversing with Him (Glorified be He) this will prompt you to concentrate on and be humble in your Salah. It will keep Satan away from you and protect you from his insinuations. If you experience a great deal of Waswasah in your Salah, then spit dryly to your left three times and seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan three times. Then, he will depart you, In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills). The Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded one of his Sahabah (Companions) to do that, when he complained to him saying: "O Messenger of Allah, Satan makes me confused about my Salah." You do not have to repeat your Salah because of insinuations. You have to perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) if you did something that necessitates it, such as omitting the first Tashahhud by mistake, or forgetting to say Tasbih when bowing or prostrating. If you are not sure whether you have prayed three Rak'ahs or four, when offering Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer for example, then you should assume it is three and complete your Salah (by praying another Rak'ah), and make Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) twice before Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). If you are not sure whether you have prayed two or three Rak'ahs in Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, then you should regard it as two and complete your Salah (by praying another Rak'ah), then perform Sujud-ul-Sahw twice before Taslim, because this is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) enjoined. Allah is the One Who grants success!

Ruling on doubts after offering Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 262)

From 'Abdul 'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz to our honorable brother, may Allah protect you!

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I have read your letter in which you wrote: Having performed both 'Isha' (Night) Prayer and Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory prayer performed on a regular basis), we left the Masjid (mosque). While standing by the door of the Masjid, some suspected that we had not performed the Salah (Prayer) in full i.e., we performed three Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) only. This made most of us skeptical except for a few who left before performing the Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) and before hearing this. As for us, we gathered and became doubtful, we returned and performed one Rak'ah behind the Imam. We ask your Eminence about the ruling on our Salah. Is it sufficient or should we re-perform the whole Salah again, because there was a long gap of time and, in between, we performed both Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) and the Witr? What is the ruling on those who (left early and) did not perform such a Rak'ah with us?

A: As long as doubt happened after finishing Salah, then you do not have to re-perform the Salah, because doubting after finishing worship has no effect on its validity. May Allah grant us success!

As-salamu 'Alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh!

Ruling on the Salah of a person who doubts the number of Rak'ahs and then follows a neighboring worshipper

(Part No. 11; Page No. 263)

Q: A.M.Gh. from Al-Bahah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, says: Entering the Masjid (mosque) to perform Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer, I joined the congregational Salah after the Imam performed some Rak'ahs (units of Prayer). After the Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) of the Imam, I was not sure of the number of Rak'ahs I missed from the Salah so I patterned after the person who was praying beside me because we both entered the Masjid simultaneously. Accordingly, I followed him in Ruku' (bowing) and Sujud (prostration) until I finished what I have missed and I did not perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness). What is the ruling of Shari'ah (Islamic law) on what I have done? Did I commit a sin? Kindly, answer my question. May Allah reward you with the best! A: In such a case, a Muslim should base their Salah on what they are sure of. If one is in doubt about whether one has prayed with the Imam one Rak'ah or two, then one must assume that it is just one Rak'ah and then complete their Salah and perform Sujud-ul-Sahw twice, before concluding one's Salah with Taslim. If one is not sure whether they have prayed with the Imam two Rak'ahs or three, then they should regard them as two and complete Salah, and perform Sujud-ul-Sahw twice before Taslim, because it is authentically reported in the Hadith of Abu Sa'id (may Allah be pleased with him)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 264)

that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (If any of you doubts during their Salah and does not know whether they have performed three or four (Rak'ahs), they should cast aside their doubts and build on what they are sure of. Then they should perform two prostrations before offering Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). If the Rak'ah they have prayed is the fifth, they (the two prostrations) will make their Salah of an even number of Rak'ahs; and if by praying it they have completed four Rak'ahs, they (the two prostrations) will cause chagrin to Satan.) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) Thus, you have to re-perform the mentioned Salah, because you did not perform it properly according to the way prescribed in Shari'ah. Your following of the other person who joined the congregation with you cannot be counted on. May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him!

Causes of feeling Khushu' in Salah

Q: What are the causes of lacking Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) in Salah (Prayer)? How can a person get rid of this?

A: Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ Khushu' has its causes, and lacking it has also its causes.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 265)

The causes that make you acquire Khushu' are to submit yourself fully before Allah and keep in mind that you are standing before your Lord (Glorified and Exalted be He). It is stated in an authentic Hadith: ﴾When one of you stands for Salah, they should not wipe away the pebbles, for mercy is facing them.﴿ According to another narration: ﴾When one of you is in Salah, they are speaking in private to their Lord.﴿

Thus, a person who enters into Salah is actually speaking in private to their Lord; keeping in mind such a great position, that one is standing before Allah, makes the praying person acquire Khushu' and concentrate in Salah. Thus, a worshipper should keep in mind the Glory of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) and that they are standing before the Most Great (Glorified and Exalted be He). They should concentrate on their recitation, Sujud (prostration) and Ruku' (bowing). They should keep in mind all the necessary duties in this great position. Being inadvertent in the presence of Allah makes one's Salah defective. Accordingly, the praying person should remember this so as to get rid of inattention or any distracting thoughts. The praying person should continue to ask Allah to help them do so during Sujud and upon finishing the last part of Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer), saying, "O Allah, help me to acquire Khushu'! O Allah, make it easy for me to feel Khushu'! O Allah, I seek refuge with You from Satan and from the evil of myself!" Thus, the praying person should ask and seek the help of their Lord (Glorified and Exalted be He).

Basing actions on certainty when in doubt whether the Rak'ahs offered are three or four

(Part No. 11; Page No. 266)

Q: If a praying person is not sure whether they offered three or four Rak'ahs (units of Prayer), what should they do then?

A: It is obligatory upon the person who doubts the number of Rak'ahs offered to base the rest of Salah (Prayer) upon that which they are certain about, which is the lesser actions they performed. Accordingly, with regard to the case at hand, the questioner should deem the number of Rak'ahs performed as three, and offer a fourth one, perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (prostration of forgetfulness) and say Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after that. This is based on the saying of Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾If any of you doubts during their Salah and does not know whether they have performed three or four (Rak'ahs), they should cast aside their doubts and build on what they are sure of. Then they should perform two prostrations before offering Taslim. If the Rak'ah they have prayed is the fifth, they (the two prostrations) will make their Salah of an even number of Rak'ahs; and if by praying it they have completed four Rak'ahs, they (the two prostrations) will cause chagrin to Satan.﴿ (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih from the Hadith of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudry)

But if the praying person thinks that omitting or completing a part of Salah is what is more likely to have happened, they should build on what they think is the stronger possibility, and then say Taslim and offer after it Sujud-ul-Sahw, according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾When any of you is in doubt during their Salah, they should seek what is correct and complete their Salah accordingly. Then, they should say Taslim and offer the two prostrations (of forgetfulness) after Taslim.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih from the Hadith of Ibn Mas'ud)

Permissibility of performing Sujud-ul-Sahw before or after Taslim

(Part No. 11; Page No. 267)

Q: Some Imams perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) after Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). Some others do it before Taslim and others prostrate before and after Taslim, so when should one perform Sujud-ul-Sahw before Taslim and when should one perform it after Taslim? Are the cases of offering it before or after Taslim Wajib (obligatory) or Mustahab (desirable)?

A: The matter is flexible, for it is permissible to offer Sujud-ul-Sahw both before or after Taslim, according to the Hadiths reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard. However, it is better to offer it before Taslim except in two cases:

First: If a praying person offers Taslim although they omitted a Rak'ah or more. In this case, it is better to offer Sujud-ul-Sahw after completing Salah and offering Taslim, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard when he (peace be upon him) offered Taslim while missing two Rak'ahs as reported in the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), and when he offered Taslim while missing one Rak'ah as reported in the Hadith of 'Imran Ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with them). In both cases he offered Sujud-ul-Sahw after fulfilling the missed Rak'ahs and saying Taslim.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 268)

Second: If the praying person has doubts about the number of Rak'ahs they performed and are not sure whether they offered three or four Rak'ahs during a four-Rak'ah Salah (Prayer consisting of four units), two or three during Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, or one or two Rak'ahs during Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, but thinks that what is more likely to have happened is omission of a part of Salah or completion of Salah, they should depend on the stronger possibility. In these cases, it is preferable to offer Sujud-ul-Sahw after Taslim according to the Hadith of Ibn Mas'ud, which was mentioned in answering the previous question. Allah is the One Who grants success!

Late-coming Ma'mum should perform Sujud-ul-Sahw after completing Salah

Q: Should a latecomer to congregational Salah (Prayer) perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) if they make a mistake? When should a latecomer perform Sujud-ul-Sahw? Should a Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) perform Sujud-ul-Sahw when they make a mistake?

A: A Ma'mum is not required to perform Sujud-ul-Sahw when they make a mistake and they should follow the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), if they joined the congregational Salah from the beginning. However, the one who joined the congregational Salah late should perform Sujud-ul-Sahw with the Imam, if the latter made a mistake, or perform it alone after completing the Salah if they make a mistake while making up for what they missed before joining the Imam, as mentioned in the previous questions. May Allah grant us success!

Some questions concerning Sujud-ul-Sahw

(Part No. 11; Page No. 269)

Q: Is Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) prescribed in the following situations:

1- If in the last two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) of a four-Rak'ah Salah (Prayer consisting of four units) a praying person recites, along with Surah Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an), whatever Surahs they know from the Qur'an.

2- If a praying person recites some passages of the Qur'an in Sujud (prostration) or says in the sitting between the two Sujuds: "Subhan Rabbi Al-'Azhim" (Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great).

3- If a praying person recites loudly in a Sirri Salah (Prayer with subvocal recitation) or subvocally in a Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud).

A: If a praying person forgetfully recites, in one or both of the last two Rak'ahs of a four-Rak'ah Salah, one or more Ayahs (Qur'anic verse) or a Surah (Qur'anic chapter), it is not prescribed for them to make Sujud-ul-Sahw, for it was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would sometimes recite more of the Qur'an after Al-Fatihah in the third and fourth Rak'ahs in the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer. It was authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) praised the commander who used to recite after Al-Fatihah in all Rak'ahs Surah Al-Ikhlas: ﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴾ However, it is well-known that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would recite only Al-Fatihah in the third and fourth Rak'ahs as reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Abu Qatadah (may Allah be pleased with him).

It was authentically reported that Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) recited in the third Rak'ah of

(Part No. 11; Page No. 270)

the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer after the Fatihah: ﴿(They say): "Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower."﴾ All this indicates that there is flexibility in this regard.

As for a praying person who forgetfully recites the Qur'an in Ruku' (bowing) or Sujud, they should make Sujud-ul-Sahw, for it is not permissible to deliberately recite Qur'an in the Ruku' or Sujud, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade this. So if a praying person recites Qur'an in the Ruku' or Sujud out of forgetfulness, they should make Sujud-ul-Sahw. Similarly, if a praying person forgets and says in the Ruku': "Subhan Rabbi Al-A'la" (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High) instead of saying: "Subhan Rabbi Al-'Azhim" (Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great), or forgets in the Sujud and says: "Subhan Rabbi Al-'Azhim" instead of "Subhan Rabbi Al-A'la", they should make Sujud-ul-Sahw for they have abandoned an obligatory act out of forgetfulness. However, if a praying person combines forgetfully between the two sayings in the Ruku' or Sujud, it is not obligatory to make Sujud-ul-Sahw, and if one does it, no problem, because of the general applicability of the evidence reported in this regard. This ruling applies to an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer), a Munfarid (person offering Salah individually) or a latecomer to Salah. As for the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) who joins the Salah with the Imam from the very beginning, they should not make Sujud-ul-Sahw in such cases for they have to follow the Imam. Similarly, if a person recites loudly in the Sirri Salah or subvocally in the Jahri Salah, they are not obliged to make Sujud-ul-Sahw, for the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) would sometimes recite an Ayah aloud in the Sirri Salah so that those praying would hear it. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on following the Imam in Sujud-ul-Sahw after rising

(Part No. 11; Page No. 271)

Q: A questioner from Riyadh inquires: I stood up to make up for what I missed after the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), then a few moments after Taslim the Imam made Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) and I prostrated with him. Then I stood up and made up for what I missed. Was this correct, if not, what should I have done? Guide me, may Allah reward you well!

A: You have done well and there is nothing else you must do. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (The Imam is appointed to be followed, so do not be at variance with him.)

However, if you completed your Salah and then made Sujud-ul-Sahw after finishing Salah, it would have been right as well, for having made the intention to pray individually to make up for what you missed. May Allah grant us success!

Should one who forget to recite a Surah after Al-Fatihah offer Sujud-ul-Sahw?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 272)

Q: A questioner says: I offered the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer individually and in the second Rak'ah (unit of Prayer), I forgot to recite a Surah (Qur'anic chapter) after Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) and remembered just before making Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) so I offered Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness). Is what I did correct?

A: There is nothing wrong with what you did and you need not have offered Sujud-ul-Sahw, for it is not obligatory to recite a Surah or some Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) after reciting Al-Fatihah. It is Wajib (obligatory) only to recite Al-Fatihah, and it is Mustahab (desirable) to recite after it a Surah in the first and second Rak'ah in any Salah (Prayer). However, if you offered Sujud-ul-Sahw, it is all right and your Salah is valid.

Ruling on saying Taslim inattentively after praying two Rak'ahs and on forgetting Takbirat-ul-Ihram

(Part No. 11; Page No. 273)

This letter is from 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother H. M. Th., may Allah protect him!

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

In reference to your Fatwa request registered in the Departments of Scholarly Research and Ifta' under no. 1513 on 21/4/1407 A.H. including two questions. Following is our reply:

Q 1: We set off on a Journey and when Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer became due, we appointed one of us to lead us in Salah (Prayer). However, he inattentively offered two Rak'ahs (unit of Prayers) only and said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). He did not deliberately omit the last Rak'ah. One of the Ma'mums (people being led by an Imam in Prayer) drew his attention to the third missed Rak'ah and asked him to make up for it. It is worth mentioning that we also glorified Allah (i.e. said, "Subahan Allah [All glory is due to Allah]" out loud to draw his attention, but he did not respond. The Imam offered the third missed Rak'ah and performed Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) after saying Taslim. Is our Salah (Prayer) valid? Should we repeat it? Is Salah offered by the man who drew the Imam's attention to the missed Rak'ah valid?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 274)

Would the Hadith of Dhul-Yadayn be applicable in his case or is his Salah rendered Batil (null and void) because of the fact that talking nullifies Salah?

A: The Salah offered by the Imam is valid. As for the Ma'mums, they have two rulings: First, if the Ma'mum knows that the Imam forgot to offer a third Rak'ah and they are aware of the Shar'y (Islamic legal) ruling stating that it is not permissible to conclude Salah and say Taslim with the Imam after two Rak'ahs only and that one must stand up and pray the third Rak'ah, their Salah is Batil because they intentionally said Taslim after the second Rak'ah before completing the Salah, although they know that this not permissible. Second, if the Ma'mum followed the Imam in saying Taslim and they did not realize that he forgot a Rak'ah or they were unaware of the ruling, they should not repeat Salah if they made up for this missed Rak'ah with the Imam after being warned. The Salah of the person who drew the Imam's attention is valid, if he did not know the ruling based on the Hadith of Dhul-Yadayn.

Q 2: The case in this question did not really happen; rather, it was posed as a result of a discussion held between some people: If a person comes to a congregational Salah (Prayer) then joins it without offering Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: ''Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]'' upon starting Prayer) out of forgetfulness. He did not remember this mistake until the third Rak'ah (unit of Prayer). Is his Salah valid even though this Rukn (integral /pillar) was forgotten? Should a person start the Salah after standing from Ruku' (bowing) in the first Rak'ah or from where they remember this missed pillar?

A: The mentioned Salah is invalid, due to not pronouncing Takbirat-ul-Ihram. According to Ijma' (consensus of scholars), it is a Rukn of Salah, without which Salah cannot be valid.

Ruling on the Salah of one who inattentively offers Taslim before the Imam

(Part No. 11; Page No. 275)

Q: What is the ruling on offering Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) before the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) forgetfully? Will the Salah (Prayer) be valid or not?

A: If the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) inattentively offers Taslim before the Imam, they must resume the intention of praying then offer Taslim after the Imam. There will be no sin upon them and their Salah will be valid in this case. However, if the person is a latecomer, and has missed one or more Rak'ahs (units of Prayer), they must offer Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) for offering Taslim before the Imam after completing the Rak'ahs they had missed.

Ruling on the Salah of one who forgets Takbirat-ul-Ihram

Q: If a praying person forgets to offer Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer), should they continue their Salah until they finish it and after that offer it again or stop and start a new Salah?

A: Anyone who forgets to say Takbirat-ul-Ihram or has doubt about it should say Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar") at once and starts their Salah from when they offered this Takbir.

For example, if they say Takbir after the first Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) behind the Imam, they should act as if they missed the first Rak'ah. Therefore, they should make up for it when the Imam says Taslim. Likewise, if they say it in the third Rak'ah, they should regard themselves as having missed two Rak'ahs. Therefore, they should offer two Rak'ahs when the Imam says Taslim. This applies to cases of certainty, but if the person is suffering from frequent doubts, one should assume that they have said Takbir at the beginning of Salah and not make up for any parts in order to frustrate Satan and fight the doubts cast by him. All praise is due to Allah!

Ruling on a praying person who forgets to recite Surah Al-Fatihah

Q: If a praying person forgets to recite Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an), should they perform a Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) to compensate for it? Should they offer Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness)?

A: If the person offering Salah (Prayer) is a Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer), nothing is required of them and the Imam bears responsibility for it, whether they forget, are unaware of the ruling, or even miss the standing. If the person is an Imam or a Munfarid (person offering Salah individually), they should perform a Rak'ah instead of the one in which they forgot to recite Al-Fatihah and prostrate for forgetfulness. A person who is led in Salah acts exactly as their Imam.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 277)

If the Ma'mum forgets, is unaware of the ruling, or misses the standing, it will be sufficient for them the part of the Rak'ah where they caught up with the Imam, as mentioned above, based on the Hadith of Abu Bakrah Al-Thaqafy (may Allah be pleased with him) when he came while the Messenger (peace be upon him) was in Ruku' (bowing), so he bowed then entered in the row. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) finished the Salah, he (peace be upon him) said to him: (May Allah increase your zeal for good! But do not repeat it again (bowing in that way.) He (peace be upon him) did not command him to compensate for the Rak'ah in which he joined the Ruku' and missed the standing.

Ruling on the Salah of one who forgetfully offers only one prostration

Q: An Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) offered 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer and during the last Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) he performed one Sujud (prostration) only and sat to offer the last Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) and then said Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). Consequently, some praying people told him that he offered just one Sujud in the last Rak'ah. Upon that the Imam stood, led them offering an entire Rak'ah, sat to offer Tashahhud, said Taslim and finally he performed Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness). Is this right?

A: Yes, this is the prescribed procedure; if the Imam forgets to perform one of the two Sujuds then he remembers or is reminded, in this case he must stand and perform a complete Rak'ah, and after completing the Salah (Prayer) and saying Taslim,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 278)

he should offer Sujud-ul-Sahw, which is the better course of action. The same ruling applies to the Munfarid (person offering Salah individually) if they experience the case mentioned above. Moreover, if they perform Sujud-ul-Sahw before Taslim, there is nothing wrong in this, but it is better to do it after it.

Ruling on offering Sujud-ul-Sahw for forgetting Qunut in Witr Prayer or reciting out loud in a Jahri Salah

Y.S.M.N. from Iraq, Al-Anbar, says: Is it obligatory for me to offer Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness) on forgetting to supplicate in Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units), or for reciting subvocally in a Jahri Salah (Prayer recited out loud)?

A: It is not obligatory to offer Sujud-ul-Sahw if a person forgets to make Qunut (supplication recited while standing after bowing in the last unit of Prayer) in Witr Prayer or forgets to recite out loud in a Jahri Salah. But there is no problem if they prostrate.

Ruling on Salah when the first Tashahhud is left out forgetfully or intentionally

(Part No. 11; Page No. 279)

Q: An Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) when leading the Salah (Prayer) stood up in the second Rak'ah after prostration and did not sit for the first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/last unit of Prayer); although he was notified, he did not respond. Again at Taslim he was reminded, but he concluded the Salah with Talsim and did not perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (prostration of forgetfulness). After Taslim some of those who prayed behind him asked him why he did not perform Sujud-ul-Sahw. He said the position where the first Tashahhud was due, was missed. So, should the Imam repeat the Salah for intentional omission of an obligatory act of Salah? And what should he and the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) do in case of being unaware of the correct ruling in this regard? Please, advise. May Allah reward you well!

A: If a praying person leaves out the first Tashahhud intentionally, their Salah becomes invalid according to the more correct of the two opinions of scholars. This is in the case of a person who is aware and mindful of the ruling; but if they do not know it, there is no blame on them. However, if a praying person omits the first Tashahhud out of forgetfulness, it is obligatory on them to perform Sujud-ul-Sahw. If they do not perform it intentionally, their Salah becomes invalid. If, however, they forget to perform Sujud-ul-Sahw before Taslim, then they are reminded or remember, it is obligatory to offer Sujud-ul-Sahw after Taslim and say Taslim again, as in the cases where Sujud-ul-Sahw should be performed after concluding the Salah with Taslim. But if it is not performed, there is difference among scholars concerning the invalidity of Salah due to that, namely neglecting Sujud-ul-Sahw after Taslim, whether the right position for performing it is after or before Taslim, and for forgetting it becomes due after Taslim.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 280)

Abu Muhammad ibn Qudamah (may Allah be merciful to him) said in his book "Al-Mughny": "If a praying person leaves an obligatory act intentionally and this act is to be performed before Talsim, their Salah becomes invalid, because of willful negligence of an obligatory act of Salah. If they leave out an obligatory act to be performed after Taslim, their Salah does not become invalid by leaving it, because it is a compensatory act outside the worship to make up for a neglected act, which, when left out, does not nullify the worship itself, as in the atonements offered in Hajj, whether the right place for performing Sujud-ul-Sahw is after or before Taslim, and as a result of forgetting it becomes due after Taslim. Ahmad was quoted as stating what proves the invalidity of the Salah in such state, while others mentioned that he did not offer a legal opinion in that regard."

Accordingly, the correct opinion regarding the case stated by the questioner is that the Salah is valid. All the congregation do not have to repeat the Salah, unless the Imam deliberately neglects an act that is due before Taslim while aware of the Shar'y (Islamic legal) ruling. In the last case, he must repeat the Salah for abandoning an obligatory act without a legal excuse. As for the Ma'mums, they have to perform Sujud-ul-Sahw after Taslim if the Imam does not do it, according to the majority of scholars as stated in "Al-Mughny." Leaving out Sujud-ul-Sahw makes the Salah of the entire congregation incomplete. Accordingly, if the Imam does not prostrate to make up for the neglected act, the Ma'mums should prostrate themselves whether individually or appoint one of them to lead them in fulfilling this. This is because when the Imam abstains from fulfilling an obligatory act, the duty of following him as Imam stops and the Ma'mums must independently make up for the obligatory act. This is similar to the case when the Imam says Taslim while omitting an act, for example, and although the Ma'mums notify him of that, he does not respond. The Ma'mums have to complete their Salah individually or after another Imam from them. This is based on the rule that completing Salah is obligatory on all; when the Imam abstains from this, those offering Salah behind him should not follow him anymore. However, if they do not perform Sujud-ul-Sahw, their Salah will not be invalidated,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 281)

because this is an obligatory act outside the Salah, which does not nullify the Salah when left out, such as Adhan (call to Prayer) and Iqamah (call to start the Prayer), and atonements made during Hajj. Allah (may He be Exalted and Glorified) knows best.

Ruling on Salah when leaving out the first Tashahhud then Sujud-ul-Sahw

Q: What should a praying person do if they forget to recite the first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/last unit of Prayer) and then forget to perform Sujud-ul-Sahw (Prostration of Forgetfulness)?

A: If they remember after Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), they should perform Sujud-ul-Sahw. However, according to the more correct of the two opinions of scholars, if the period between the two actions (Taslim and remembering) is long, they are exempted from performing it. May Allah grant us success!

(Part No. 11; Page No. 282)

Supererogatory Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 283)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 284)

Ruling on supererogatory Salah at forbidden times

(Part No. 11; Page No. 285)

Q: What is the ruling on a person who offers supererogatory Salah (Prayer) fifteen or ten minutes before Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer? Please, clarify this matter for a fellow sister said that it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah at this time.

A: It is not permissible for a Muslim to offer supererogatory Salah before Zhuhr when the sun is straight overhead, as this is included among the time periods when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah. It is authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Three hours during which there should be no praying or burying of the dead: after the Subh (Dawn) Prayer until the sun rises, when the sun stands straight overhead until it passes its zenith, and when the sun inclines to setting until it sets.﴿

What is meant is that shortly before noon no Salah should be offered. This is not a long period; rather, it is short and it lasts for the time period when the sun is in the middle of the sky.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 286)

It is called the time when the sun is standing in the zenith, during which it is impermissible to enter into worship through Salah until its passes its zenith, i.e. until the Adhan (call) to Zhuhr Prayer is announced. After this time a person may offer Salah as much as they like. It is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah before the sun passes its zenith. It is a very short period; it is almost fifteen or twenty minutes before noon. It is better to keep on the safe side and stop offering supererogatory Salah thirty minutes before noon. After the sun passes its zenith, the time of impermissibility ends, until a Muslim is allowed to offer Salah until 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer.

Ruling on offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid at forbidden times

Q: If a person enters the Masjid (mosque) before the Adhan (call to Prayer) of Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, is it permissible to offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) or should they sit down? Please, advise.

A: There are five times during which it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah (Prayer). These forbidden times are as follows: (1) From the break of Fajr (Dawn) until sunrise, (2) immediately after sunrise until it has risen to the length of a spear, (3) the time when the sun is straight overhead before noon until it passes its zenith, (4) the time after 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer until the sun is about to set, (5) and the time of sunset until it has set.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 287)

According to the more correct of the two opinions maintained by scholars, there is nothing wrong with performing occasional Salahs offered for specific reasons during the times when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah. Accordingly, the person who enters the Masjid after 'Asr or Fajr is recommended to offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid, before sitting down. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When anyone of you enters the Masjid, they should not sit down until they pray two Rak'ahs.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Similarly, this applies to the two Rak'ahs of Tawaf (two-unit-Prayer performed after circumambulating the Ka'bah). A person may offer this Salah upon circumambulating the Ka'bah, whether it is after 'Asr, Fajr, or at any time, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾O Banu 'Abd Manaf, do not prevent anyone from circumambulating this House (Ka'bah) and praying there at any time they want, night or day.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan [Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y, Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah] and ranked as Sahih [authentic] by Al-Tirmidhy and Ibn Habban)

This is also true with Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse). If the solar eclipse occurs after 'Asr, the Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet) is to offer this Salah, according to the more correct of the two opinions maintained by scholars. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The sun and moon are two of the Signs of Allah; they are not eclipsed because of the death or life of anyone. So when you see them, you should invoke Allah and pray until it is over.﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 288)

According to another narration related by Al-Bukhari: "until it is clear."

Q: Offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid at the times when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah is very controversial. Some scholars are of the view that it is impermissible to offer it when the sun rises or sets. The opposite opinion is that since this is one of the Salahs done for a specific reason which do not have fixed times, it is permissible to offer it during the forbidden times even at sunset. Please, advise with regard to this matter in detail.

A: Muslim scholars hold different opinions concerning this matter. The correct opinion is that offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid is permitted at all times, even after Fajr and after 'Asr, because of the general applicability of the Hadith: ﴾When anyone of you enters the Masjid, they should not sit down until they pray two Rak'ahs.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid is also one of the occasional Salahs offered for specific reasons, like Salat-ul-Tawaf and Salat-ul-Kusuf. The correct opinion concerning all of these Salahs is that it is permissible to offer them at times when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah, like in the case of making up for missed obligatory Salahs. This is based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning Salat-ul-Tawaf: ﴾O Banu 'Abd Manaf, do not prevent anyone from circumambulating this House (Ka'bah) and praying there at any time they want, night or day.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan through an authentic Isnad [chain of narrators])

(Part No. 11; Page No. 289)

Concerning Salat-ul-Kusuf, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The sun and moon are two of the Signs of Allah; they are not eclipsed because of the death or life of anyone. So when you see them, you should invoke Allah and pray until it is clear.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who forgets a Salah let them offer it as soon as they remember it, for there is no Kaffarah (expiation) for it other than that.﴿ These Hadiths apply to the times when supererogatory Salah is prohibited and other times as well. Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and his knowledgeable disciple Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah be merciful to them both) advocated this opinion. May Allah grant us success!

Q: If a person enters the Masjid (mosque) at a time when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah (Prayer), should they offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) or not?

A: It is preferable for them to offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid according to the more correct of the two opinions maintained by scholars and the general applicability of the Hadith: ﴾When anyone of you enters the Masjid, they should not sit down until they pray two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer).﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) However, if a person sits without offering Salah, there is no blame on them.

Offering supererogatory Salah at forbidden times

(Part No. 11; Page No. 290)

Q: Is it Makruh (reprehensible) to offer any Salah (Prayer) even Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) before Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer?

A: This question is quite vague and needs further explanation regarding the time and type of the offered Salah. The time after 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer until sunset, for example, is a time when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah. Therefore, a person should not generally offer Salah during that time based on the Hadiths reported to that effect, among them is the one in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾There is no Salah after Subh (Dawn) until the sun has risen high, and there is no Salah after 'Asr until the sun has set.﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

But if the person is making up for a missed obligatory Salah, it will not be subject to this ruling according to Ijma' (consensus of scholars), for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who forgets a Salah let them offer it as soon as they remember it, for there is no Kaffarah (expiation) for it other than that.﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 291)

As for occasional Salahs that are offered for specific reasons such as: Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse), Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) or other acts like Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation), they are permissible during the times when it is forbidden to offer supererogatory Salah, according to the preponderant opinion of scholars, because the Hadiths reported regarding occasional Salahs offered for specific reasons generally include all times; the times when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah and other times, as the following Hadith: ﴾When anyone of you enters the Masjid, they should not sit down until they pray two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer).﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

In summary, the texts of Hadith reported with respect to prohibiting Salah during impermissible times are not to be interpreted as including making up for missed Salahs or occasional Salahs offered for specific reasons.

Ruling on offering Two-Rak'ahs Prayer after Tawaf at forbidden times

Q: What is the ruling on offering a two-Rak'ahs Prayer (two-unit-Prayer) after Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka'bah) behind Maqam Ibrahim (the Station of Ibrahim) at a time when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah?

A: There is nothing wrong with this, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (O Banu 'Abd Manaf, do not prevent anyone from circumambulating this House (Ka'bah) and praying there at any time they want, night or day.) (Related by Imam Ahmad and the Four Compilers of Hadith [Imams Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah] through Sahih [authentic] Sanad [chain of narrators])

(Part No. 11; Page No. 292)

Since Salat-ul-Tawaf (two-unit-Prayer performed after circumambulating the Ka'bah) is one of the occasional Salahs that are offered for specific reasons, there is nothing wrong with offering it at the time when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah, as applies to Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) and Salat-ul-Khusuf (Prayer on a lunar eclipse) based upon the aforementioned Hadith and many others reported in this regard. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (The sun and moon are two of the Signs of Allah; they are not eclipsed because of the death or life of anyone. So when you see them, you should invoke Allah and pray until it is clear.) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) He (peace be upon him) also stated: (When anyone of you enters the Masjid, they should not sit down until they pray two Rak'ahs.) (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in their Sahih [authentic] Books of Hadith on the authority of Abu Qatadah)

The Hadith: "There is no Salah after 'Asr until the sun has set"

Q: What is the degree of the authenticity of the following Hadith: "There is no Salah (Prayer) after 'Asr (Afternoon) until the sun has set, and there is no Salah after Fajr (Dawn) until the sun has risen, except in Makkah, except in Makkah, except in Makkah ..."?

A: The above quoted Hadith with this addition: "except in Makkah" is Da'if (a Hadith that fails to reach the status of Hasan, due to a weakness in the chain of narration or one of the narrators).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 293)

The origin of the Hadith is authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) and others on the authority of some Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (There is no Salah after Subh (Dawn) until the sun has risen high, and there is no Salah after 'Asr until the sun has set.) However, the occasional Salahs that are offered for specific reasons are an exception to the general ruling in the Hadith, according to the more correct of the two opinions maintained by scholars, such as Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse), Salat-ul-Tawaf (two-unit-Prayer performed after circumambulating the Ka'bah) and Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque). It is permissible to offer such forms of Salah at a time when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah, based on many reported Sahih (authentic) Hadiths that indicate that these occasional Salahs are excluded from the general ruling. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid and supererogatory Salah after sunset and before Maghrib Prayer

Q: What is the ruling on offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) following the Adhan (call) to Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and before offering this prayer, given that the period between the Adhan and Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) is short? What is the ruling on offering Nafilah (supererogatory) prayers other than Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid before offering the Maghrib Prayer?

A: Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid is a stressed Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) at all times even at the time when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah (Prayer), according to the more correct of the two opinions maintained by scholars, based upon the generality of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

(Part No. 11; Page No. 294)

﴾When anyone of you enters the Masjid, they should not sit down until they pray two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer).﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Moreover, offering Salah after the Adhan of Maghrib Prayer and before the Iqamah is Sunnah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Pray two (supererogatory) Rak'ahs before Magrib (Prayer)! Pray two Rak'ahs before Magrib. Then in the third time he (peace be upon him) said: For whoever wants to.﴿ (Related by Al-Bukhari)

The Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) used to hasten to offer two Rak'ahs once the Adhan of Maghrib Prayer was pronounced and before the Iaqamah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) witnessed that and did not forbid them from doing so; rather, he (peace be upon him) commanded to do it, as stated in the aforementioned Hadith.

No particular Surahs in Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid

(Part No. 11; Page No. 295)

Q: Is there a particular Surah (Qur'anic chapter) that should be recited in Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque)?

A: There are no particular Surahs to be recited in Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid; it is like any other Salah (Prayer) where the person should recite in each Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) and whatever they know of the Ever-Glorious Qur'an. It is only Al-Fatihah which is Wajib (obligatory) to be recited for it is a Rukn (integral/Pillar) of Salah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿There is no Salah for the one who does not recite Fatiha-tul-Kitab (Opening of the Book, i.e. Al-Fatihah).﴾ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

The Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet) is to offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid on entering the Masjid at any time, even if it is a time when it is not permissible to offer supererogatory Salah such as after the 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer or after the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, based on the generality of the Hadiths indicating its permissibility. It is also one of the occasional Salahs offered for specific reasons such as Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse) and Salat-ul-Tawaf (two-unit-Prayer performed after circumambulating the Ka'bah) which are permissible at any time, according to the more correct of the two opinions maintained by scholars. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on Qiyam-ul-Layl and its description

(Part No. 11; Page No. 296)

Q: What is the ruling on Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night) and how should it be offered?

A: Qiyam-ul-Layl is a stressed Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet). Describing the Servants of the Most Merciful, Allah (Glorified be He) states: ﴾And those who spend the night in worship of their Lord, prostrate and standing.﴿ In Surah (Qur'anic chapter) Adh-Dhariyat, Allah, thus describes the pious worshippers: ﴾They used to sleep but little by night [invoking their Lord (Allâh) and praying, with fear and hope].﴿ ﴾And in the hours before dawn, they were (found) asking (Allâh) for forgiveness.﴿

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also stated: ﴾The best Sawm after Ramadan is Allah's Month: Muharram, and the best Salah (Prayer) after Faridah (obligatory Prayer) is Salah during the night.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book])

Qiyam-ul-Layl has great superiority as Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) describes His Servants who observe it, saying: ﴾And those who spend the night in worship of their Lord, prostrate and standing.﴿ And:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 297)

﴾They used to sleep but little by night [invoking their Lord (Allâh) and praying, with fear and hope].﴿ ﴾And in the hours before dawn, they were (found) asking (Allâh) for forgiveness.﴿ Allah addressed His Prophet (peace be upon him), saying:﴾ O you wrapped in garments (i.e. Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم)!﴿ ﴾Stand (to pray) all night, except a little -﴿ ﴾Half of it or a little less than that,﴿ ﴾Or a little more. And recite the Qur'ân (aloud) in a slow, (pleasant tone and) style.﴿ He (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (in charity in Allâh's Cause) out of what We have bestowed on them.﴿ ﴾No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.﴿

Qiyam-ul-Layl is of high merit; it is prescribed to be offered in pairs of Rak'ahs (units of Prayer), for the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Night Salah (Prayer) is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).﴿ (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Ibn 'Umar) The best of Qiyam-ul-Layl is that offered in the last part of the night, except if one fears not waking up at the end of night; then it is best to offer it at the beginning of the night before going to sleep. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾If a person fears that they may not get up in the last part of the night, let them offer Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) in the first part of it. If a person is keen on getting up in the late part of night, let them offer Witr at the end of the night,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 298)

for Salah at the end of the night is witnessed (by the angels) and that is better.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih) Its minimum is one Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) and it has no maximum limit. If it is offered as three Rak'ahs, it is preferred to say Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) in the end of the two Rak'ahs and then offer one separate Rak'ah. Similarly, if it is offered as five Rak'ahs, the praying person should say Taslim after each two Rak'ahs and then offer one separate Rak'ah. Moreover, offering three or five consecutive Rak'ahs with one Taslim and sitting for Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) once in their end is acceptable; rather, it is an act of Sunnah, for it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did this sometimes in Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer). It is authentically reported also that he (peace be upon him) offered seven consecutive Rak'ahs and sat for Tashahhud only in the last Rak'ah. It is authentically reported also that he (peace be upon him) sometimes sat in the end of the six Rak'ah and recited the first Tashahhud, then stood up before making Taslim and offered the seventh Rak'ah and recited the last Tashahhud. It is authentically reported also that he (peace be upon him) offered nine Rak'ahs and sat for the first Tashahhud in the eighth Rak'ah, then stood up before Taslim and offered the ninth Rak'ah and then recited Tashahhud and Taslim.

However, the best which was usually done by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is to say Taslim after each pair of Rak'ahs and then offer one single Rak'ah at the end, as indicated in the Hadith narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both).

The most frequent practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was to offer eleven Rak'ahs and make Taslim after each pair as authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 299)

It is authentically reported also in a Hadith other than that on the authority of 'Aishah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed Witr consisting of thirteen Rak'ahs, in which he made Taslim after each pair of Rak'ahs.

There is nothing wrong with offering more than that, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Night Salah is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).﴿ He (peace be upon him) did not set a limit for the Rak'ahs which the worshipper may offer before the single Rak'ah of Witr. This indicates that there is flexibility in this matter. If a worshipper offers twenty Rak'ahs or more and then offers a final single Rak'ah in Ramadan or at other times, it is all right. The night Salah of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) varied. Some would offer many Rak'ahs and recite short Surahs, others would offer few Rak'ahs and recite long Surahs. This is a matter open to choice - praise be to Allah - and there is nothing wrong with this, provided that the worshipper maintains Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and tranquility.

It is authentically reported on the authority of 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) ﴾Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) missed Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night) due to sleep, illness or pain, he would pray twelve Rak'ahs during the daytime.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih)

Accordingly, a person accustomed to offering three Rak'ahs at night and it happens that one oversleeps or falls ill, may offer four Rak'ahs during the day with two Taslims. Likewise, if a person usually offers more Rak'ahs, they may offer them during the day, but add another Rak'ah as to be able to make

(Part No. 11; Page No. 300)

Taslim after each pair of Rak'ahs, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as reported by 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) in the aforementioned Hadith. May Allah grant us success!

Course of action when Adhan of Fajr Prayer is announced before offering Witr

Q: I intended that if I woke up at midnight, I would offer Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units). Then, when I woke up, I started offering Salah (Prayer) until time passed and the Adhan (call to prayer) was pronounced before I could offer the final Rak'ah of Witr. So, should I offer the final single Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) after the Adhan of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer or after offering Fajr Prayer?

A: If Adhan of Fajr is announced while one has not offered Witr, one should delay performing Witr to the forenoon, after sunrise. Accordingly, one is to offer two, four, or more Rak'ahs in pairs, i.e. two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs and so on. If, however, one is used to offering three Rak'ahs during the night, one in this case will offer four Raka'hs instead and offer Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) in the end of each two Rak'ahs. If one is used to offering five Rak'ahs at night, but could not offer them during the night due to illness, sleep, or any other reason, they, in this case, will offer six Rak'ahs, saying Taslim in the end of each two of them and so on. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do so if he was prevented from offering Witr at night by sleep or illness.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 301)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer eleven Rak'ahs at night as Witr and if he could not offer them due to illness or sleep, he would offer twelve Rak'ahs instead of them during the day, according to the Hadith reported on the authority of 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. Accordingly, Muslims should abide by this, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Merits of Qiyam-ul-Layl

Q: I saw my father offering eight Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) at midnight. I asked him about the merit of Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night). He told me that the earth does not consume the body of a person who offers Qiyam-ul-Layl (i.e. their bodies will not decompose after death). Is this true? Does the soul return to the body after death or to its Creator?

A: It is encouraged to offer Qiyam-ul-Layl, for Allah (Exalted be He) describes His pious Servants, saying: ﴾And those who spend the night in worship of their Lord, prostrate and standing.﴿ He (Glorified be He) describes devout worshippers, saying: ﴾They used to sleep but little by night [invoking their Lord (Allâh) and praying, with fear and hope].﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 302)

﴾And in the hours before dawn, they were (found) asking (Allâh) for forgiveness.﴿ Allah (Exalted be He) addressed His Prophet (peace be upon him) by saying: ﴾O you wrapped in garments (i.e. Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم)!﴿ ﴾Stand (to pray) all night, except a little -﴿ ﴾Half of it or a little less than that,﴿ ﴾Or a little more. And recite the Qur'ân (aloud) in a slow, (pleasant tone and) style.﴿ Allah (Exalted be He) also says: ﴾Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (in charity in Allâh's Cause) out of what We have bestowed on them.﴿ ﴾No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.﴿

This is in addition to many other Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) that stress the excellence of performing Night Prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to perform Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer) often and urged the Muslims to it, saying: ﴾O People! Spread Salam (Islamic greeting of peace: peace be upon you), give food, join the ties of kinship and pray (at night) while people are sound asleep (i.e. negligent) you will enter Paradise in peace.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer eleven Rak`ahs in pairs; saying Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) in the end of each two Rak`ahs and then offer one single Rak`ah as Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units). Sometimes, he (peace be upon him) would offer Witr in the form of nine, seven, or five Rak`ahs. But in general, he (peace be upon him) usually offered eleven Rak`ahs, and sometimes thirteen in which he used to prolong recitation, Ruku` (bowing) and Sujud (prostration).

We know of no basis for the saying that the earth does not consume the body of the person who offers Qiyam-ul-Layl.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 303)

There is no Shar`y (Islamic legal) evidence to prove such a thing, except the prophets, because Allah has prohibited the earth to consume their bodies as authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

As to the soul of a believer, it ascends to Paradise in the form of a bird and eats from its fruits. It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The soul of the believer is a bird which hangs from the trees of Paradise.﴿ (Related by Imam Ahmad and others through authentic Isnad [chain of narrators]).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that the souls of martyrs are inside green birds that roam freely in Paradise, then they return to lanterns which hang beneath `Arsh (Allah's Throne). However, Allah will send souls back to their bodies once He so wills as when He returns them to be questioned in the grave. Thereafter, the dead person to whom the soul is sent back as such will be able to hear the question, and answer, in the case of a righteous person, or stutter and find no answer, in the case of a Kafir (disbeliever). The souls will also be returned to the bodies on the Day of Resurrection. As for the Kafirs, their souls will be in Hellfire. Allah (Exalted be He) describes the people of Pharaoh saying: ﴾The Fire, they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon. And on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the angels): "Cause Fir`aun's (Pharaoh) people to enter the severest torment!"﴿ Scholars held different opinions with regard to the dwelling place of the soul of dead Kafirs in this world.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 304)

Some are of the opinion that it is in the Fire itself, others said in the graves, and others held different opinions. Allah knows best.

Time of Witr Prayer

(Part No. 11; Page No. 305)

From 'Abdul 'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz to the honorable brother M. A. May Allah protect you from every evil.

As-salamu 'alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you!)

I have received your message dated 16/2/1409 A.H. I pray to Allah to grant you guidance and success. I inform you that the questions included in your message were examined and following are your questions and their answers:

Q: When does the time of performing Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) end? Does it end with the beginning of Adhan (call) to Fajr (Dawn) Prayer or its end? Moreover, if a person sleeps and misses it, should they make up for it and how?

A: It is prescribed for every believer, male and female, to offer Witr every night. The time for it is from 'Isha' (Night) Prayer until the breaking of dawn, according to what is reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ((Optional) Night Salah is two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).) Moreover, Muslim reported

(Part No. 11; Page No. 306)

in his Sahih on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudry (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Perform Witr before Subh (dawn) comes.) Also, Imams Ahmad, Abu Dawud and Al-Tirmidhy reported a Hadith that was ranked as Sahih (authentic) by Al-Hakim on the authority of Kharijah ibn Hudhafah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ('Allah has blessed you with a Salah (Prayer) that is better for you than red camels (i.e. most precious possession).' We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is it?' He (peace be upon him) said, 'Witr, between 'Isha' Prayer and the break of dawn.')

There are many Hadiths that are mentioned in this regard which indicate that Witr ends with the break of dawn. However, if a worshipper does not know when dawn breaks, one may rely on a Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) who is known for observing the right time of Salah. If the Mu'adhin who pays attention to the right time announces Adhan, then one has missed the Witr. As for a Mu'adhin who announces Adhan before the coming of the due time of dawn, in this case one has not missed Witr, nor does eating and drinking become prohibited for those who observe Sawm (Fasting), and similarly the Fajr Prayer does not become due by his Adhan according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (Bilal announces Adhan at night, so eat and drink until Ibn Um Maktum announces the Adhan.) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Ibn Um Maktum was blind and therefore did not announce

(Part No. 11; Page No. 307)

Adhan until he was told that dawn had come.

It is clear from what we have mentioned that the time for Witr ends with the beginning of Adhan if the Mu'adhin is observing the correct time of dawn. If, however, he says Adhan while the praying person is offering the final Rak'ah of Witr, they should complete it, because one is not certain that dawn has come just by hearing the Adhan, and there is nothing wrong in that, In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills). However, if a person misses Witr, it is prescribed for them to offer during day the number of Rak'ahs they usually perform during night and to add one Rak'ah to them to make them even-numbered. Accordingly, if they usually perform three, they should make it four, and if they usually perform five, they should make it six, and so on, saying Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after every two Rak'ahs. It is reported in the Sahih of Muslim on the authority of 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: (When the Prophet (peace be upon him) missed Witr Prayer during the night due to illness or sleep, he would pray twelve Rak'ahs during the daytime.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) usually offered eleven Rak'ahs during the night, but if illness or sleep prevented him from doing that, he would pray twelve Rak'ahs as 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) described: (saying Taslim in the end of every two Rak'ahs.) Moreover, 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) is authentically reported to have said: (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to pray ten Rak'ahs at night, saying Taslim in the end of every two Rak'ahs and then offer a single Rak'ah as Witr.) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ((Optional) Salah by night and day is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on).) (Related by Imam Ahmad and the Four Compilers of Sunan [Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y] through

(Part No. 11; Page No. 308)

an authentic Isnad [chain of narrators] from the Hadith of Ibn 'Umar) Its source is in the Two Sahih Books of Hadith with the wording stated in the beginning of the answer: ((Optional) Night Salah is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on)) Allah is the One Who grants success!

Latest time for Witr

Q: What is the latest time for offering Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units)?

A: It is the last part of the night preceding the break of dawn, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ((Optional) Night Salah (Prayer) is two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Is Witr Prayer different from optional night Prayer?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 309)

Q: Does Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) differ from optional night Salah (Prayer) in respect of the due times, the Du'a' (supplication) one says in each of the two, and also the number of Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) of each of them?

A: Witr is part of the night Salah. It is a Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) and it is the close of the night Salah. It is a single Rak'ah with which one concludes the night Salahs at the end, in the middle, or at the beginning of the night after 'Isha' (Night) Prayer. The worshipper may pray whatever number of Rak'ahs they can, then concludes it with one Rak'ah in which they recite Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) and Surah Al-Ikhlas. This is in definition of Witr Prayer, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Make Witr your last prayer during night.﴾ During such a Salah, one should perform Qunut (supplication recited while standing after bowing in the last unit of Prayer), saying the Du'a' Ma'thur (supplication based on transmitted reports): "O Allah, guide us among those You have guided...". This is the Du'a' which the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught to Al-Hasan ibn 'Aly (may Allah be pleased with them both). In addition, one should supplicate to Allah with good supplications easily remembered and said.

No two Witr Prayers in one night

(Part No. 11; Page No. 310)

Q: Is it permissible for us to perform two Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) in one night?

A: It is not permissible to offer two Witr Prayers in one night, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾There cannot be two Witr Prayers in one night.﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾Make Witr your last prayer at night.﴿ He (peace be upon him) also said: ﴾If a person fears that they may not get up in the last part of the night, let them offer Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) in the first part of it. If a person is keen on getting up in the late part of night, let them offer Witr at the end of the night, for Salah at the end of the night is witnessed (by the angels) and that is better.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book])

Thus, if it is possible for a Muslim to delay Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer) till the last portion of the night, let them conclude their Salah with a single Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) to make the Salah (Rak'ahs) they offered Witr. As for a person who cannot do so, they may perform Witr early at night.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 311)

Then if Allah help them perform optional night Salah during the last part of the night, they should offer whatever Rak'ahs they can as Shaf` (two units of Prayer), i.e., two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs, and should not repeat the Witr; rather, the Witr performed earlier is sufficient for them, based on the previously mentioned Hadith; that is, the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾There cannot be two Witr Prayers in one night.﴿

Way of nightly Salah when Witr is offered in early night and Qiyam at its end

Q: How should I pray if I offer Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) in the beginning of the night and want to offer Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night) at the end of the night?

A: If you offer Witr at the beginning of the night and after that Allah helps you offer Qiyam at the end of it, you should pray as much Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) as Allah allows you, but they should be even-numbered without repeating Witr, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (There cannot be two Witr Prayers in one night.) Moreover, it is authentically reported on the authority of 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that (the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray two Rak'ahs while he was sitting after offering Witr.) The wisdom underlying this act is to illustrate for people the permissibility of offering Salah (Prayer) after Witr. And Allah knows best!

Ruling on praying an extra Rak'ah

after offering Witr with the Imam in the first part of the night

(Part No. 11; Page No. 312)

Q: Some people, when they offer Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) with the Imam and he says Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), they get up and add another Rak'ah (unit of Prayer), because they want to offer Witr later in the night. What is the ruling on this action? Are they considered to have prayed with the Imam until he finished?

A: We do not know of any opinion on the part of the scholars objecting to doing so. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with this, so that one can pray Witr at the end of the night.

Anyone who does so is considered to have prayed with the Imam until he finished, because they continued to pray with him until he concluded the Salah, and added another Rak'ah for a Shar'y (Islamic legal) reason, which is to offer Witr later in the night. There is nothing wrong with this, and it does not exclude them from having offered Qiyam (optional Prayer at night) with the Imam until he finished. Rather, they prayed with the Imam until he finished, but they did not finish with him - they delayed it a little longer.

Q: Is reciting the Noble Qur'an out loud confined to Masjids (mosques) or applied to other places?

A: Such a ruling is not confined to Masjids; if those reciting the Noble Qur'an out loud exist in another place,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 313)

such as school, home, or public sessions, they should be instructed by the teacher or others so that they may not confuse one another.

Witr during the last part of the night is better than at its beginning

Q: Is it permissible to delay Shaf` (two units of Prayer, particularly before Witr) and Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) till after performing Qiyam-ul-Layl (standing for optional Prayer at night), or should I perform them before going to sleep?

A: A Mu'min (believer) has the choice either to perform Witr early or late during the night. Yet, it is better to perform it late in the night for those who have the ability to do so, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (If a person fears that they may not get up in the last part of the night, let them offer Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) in the first part of it. If a person is keen on getting up in the late part of night, let them offer Witr at the end of the night, for Salah at the end of the night is witnessed (by the angels) and that is better.) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book])

Accordingly, if the Mu'min can perform Witr preceded by the supererogatory night Salah at the last part of the night, it is better because at this time Allah (Exalted be He) descends and supplications are more promising to be answered.

It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Our Lord (may He be Blessed and Exalted) descends every night to the nearest heaven when one-third of the night remains and says: 'Who will call upon Me, that I may answer them? Who will ask of Me, that I may give them? Who will seek My forgiveness, that I may forgive them?') In another narration: (Allah (Glory be to Him) says: Is there any seeker of My favor to be given their want? Is there any seeker of forgiveness to be forgiven? Is there any repentant to be accepted.) This great Hadith is classed as Mutawatir (a Hadith reported by a significant number of narrators throughout the chain of narration, whose agreement upon a lie is impossible).

Such descending is done in a manner that befits Allah. None of His creation resembles Him in any of His Attributes, neither in the manner nor in likeness, such as His Istiwa' (Allah's rising over the Throne in a manner that befits Him), His Hearing, Seeing, Anger, Contentment, etc. All such Attributes are as befit the Glory and Perfection of Allah (may He be Glorified and Praised). None of His creation resembles Him in any of them. This is according to the opinion of Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah (those adhering to the Sunnah and the Muslim main body) who state that it is obligatory to affirm Allah's Attributes as mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah in a way that befits Allah (may He be Glorified and Praised). Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (There is nothing like Him; and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.) He (may He be Praised) says: ("And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.")

It is an act of Sunnah that a Mu'min offers a single Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) as Witr with which they conclude their night Salah, in which they recite Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an) and Surah Al-Ikhlas. Then, they perform Ruku' (bowing), and then stand up. It is permissible to perform Witr as three consecutive Rak'ahs with one Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second unit of Prayer) and one Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). It is also permissible to offer five consecutive Rak'ahs. Yet, it is better to offer it in the form of two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on) and to say Taslim in the end of each two Rak'ahs and then to end Salah with one single Rak'ah as Witr based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ((Optional) Night Salah (Prayer) is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).) (Agreed upon by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

This is the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). But if a person fears lest they may not wake up late at night, then the Sunnah is to perform Witr early at the beginning of the night before going to sleep. After performing two, four, six, eight, or more Rak'ahs and saying Taslim after each two Rak'ahs, they conclude Salah with just one Rak'ah as Witr.

Witr is the close of night Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 316)

Q: We know that Witr is the close of both night and day Salahs (Prayers). Yet, one day I was in the Masjid (mosque) where I performed 'Isha' (Night) Prayer and performed after it Shaf`(two units of Prayer, particularly before Witr) and Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units). Upon leaving the Masjid, one of my friends met me and insisted that I should perform Salah with him in order for him to gain the reward of congregational Salah. What is the opinion of Islam in this regard?

A: Witr is the close of night Salah, but it is not the close of day Salah. Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer is the close of day Salah, because it is the Witr of the day. As for Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer), it is concluded with Witr consisting of one Rak'ah. Thus, one single Rak'ah is the close of night Salah. Yet, there is nothing wrong with performing after it as much Salah as one can. Similarly, there is nothing wrong with offering Witr in the early part of night and then performing Qiyam (optional Prayer at night) if Allah helps one to wake up late at night. In this case, it is permissible to pray as much Rak'ahs as possible: two, four, or more Rak'ahs, in the form of pairs of Rak'ahs, and to say Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after every two Rak'ahs. Witr must not be repeated. Rather, the previously performed Witr shall suffice, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (There cannot be two Witr Prayers in one night.)

If it happens that a Muslim meets a group of his brothers or one of them and performs Salah with them or him, there is nothing wrong with that, because he performs such a Salah due to certain reasons that occur to him, i.e.,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 317)

a brother asks him to perform Salah with him, a congregation that he likes to perform Salah with, or there is an abundance of time during the last part of night, and one likes to perform as much supererogatory Salah as possible. There is nothing wrong with any such matters.

The point is that there is nothing wrong with offering supererogatory night Salah in the last part of night after having performed Witr. Yet, it is not permissible to repeat the Witr; rather, the Witr previously performed is sufficient.

Difference between Tarawih, Qiyam and Tahajjud

Q: Mr. A. M. S. from Alexandria, Egypt, asks: What is the difference between Tarawih, Qiyam and Tahajjud? Please, advise us. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: Offering Salah (Prayer) at night is called Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer) or Qiyam-ul-Layil (standing for optional Prayer at night). Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴾And in some parts of the night (also) offer the Salât (prayer) with it (i.e. recite the Qur'ân in the prayer), as an additional prayer (Tahajjud optional prayer - Nawâfil) for you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه و سلم).﴿ Allah (may He be Praised) also says: ﴾O you wrapped in garments (i.e. Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم)!﴿ ﴾Stand (to pray) all night, except a little -﴿ Moreover, Allah (Exalted be He) says describing his pious worshippers: ﴾Taking joy in the things which their Lord has given them. Verily, they were before this Muhsinûn (good-doers. See V.2:112).﴿ ﴾They used to sleep but little by night [invoking their Lord (Allâh) and praying, with fear and hope].﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 318)

As for Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan), it is used by scholars to refer to Salah at night in the month of Ramadan at the beginning of the night. It should be light, avoiding prolongation. It may be called Tahajjud or Qiyam. There is no conflict in meaning between the two terms. Allah is the One Who grants success!

Merit of Tarawih Prayer and reciting the whole Qur'an

Q: What is the merit of offering Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan), reciting the Qur'an and finishing a Khatmah (one complete reading of the whole Qur'an) during the month of Ramadan?

A: There is no doubt that Tarawih Prayer is a Mashru' (Islamically permissible) act of worship that draws one close to Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) led Muslims in offering it for some nights then he feared lest it might become obligatory for them. Thus, he left it and guided them to offer optional Salah (Prayer) in their houses. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) died and 'Umar succeeded Abu Bakr as caliph (may Allah be pleased with both of them), 'Umar saw people offering Tarawih Prayer in the Masjid (mosque) in separate groups: a man praying alone, another leading two men, and another leading more, etc. Upon that, 'Umar said: "It would be better to congregate them behind one Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer)." Then, he gathered them behind Ubay Ibn Ka'b. So, they started offering Tarawih Prayer in congregation.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 319)

'Umar used as evidence for his act the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴿Anyone who fasts the month of Ramadan, out of Iman (Faith) and Ihtisab (confident anticipation of Allah's Reward), will have their past sins forgiven. And anyone who spends Laylat-ul-Qadr in Qiyam (optional Prayer at night), out of Iman and Ihtisab, will have their past sins forgiven.﴾

'Umar also used as evidence the actual action of the Prophet (peace be upon him) during the nights referred to, and said that Wahy (Revelation) has stopped (by the death of the Prophet) and so there is no longer fear of its becoming obligatory. Thus, it is known that people performed it in congregation during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and after that during the time of 'Umar and continued doing it.

The Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) guide to this, as related in the Sahih (authentic) Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in which he said: ﴿Anyone who prays Qiyam (optional Night Prayer) with the Imam until he finishes, it will be recorded for him as spending the whole night in prayer.﴾ [Related by Imam Ahmad and the Four Compilers of Hadith (Imams Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah) with authentic Isnad (chain of narrations)] This Hadith establishes the validity of performing optional Night Salah during the month of Ramadan in congregation and indicates that this is an act of Sunnah legislated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and, after him, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. In fact, this act achieves many benefits such as to get the people gathered for a good deed and to listen to the Qur'an and other admonitions that is said in these great nights. It is recommended for Muslims during the noble month of Ramadan to study the Glorious Qur'an and recite it during the day and night, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 320)

It is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to rehearse the Qur'an with Jibril (Gabriel) every year during the month of Ramadan and in the year he (peace be upon him) died Jibril rehearsed it with him twice. One should recite the Qur'an with the aim of drawing close to Allah, pondering upon it, making use of it and acting upon it as the Salaf (righteous predecessors) used to do. Accordingly, the believers, males or females, should occupy themselves with the Glorious Qur'an by reciting, pondering, understanding it, and reviewing the books of Tafsir (exegesis of the meanings of the Qur'an) to get useful information and knowledge.

Number of Rak'ahs in Tarawih Prayer

Q: What are the prescribed number of Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) in Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan)? Is there a fixed number? What is the preferable number of Rak'ahs to be offered?

A: In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah. May peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his Companions, and anyone who follows his way of guidance.

The authentically transmitted reports from the Prophet (peace be upon him) indicate flexibility in the number of Rak'ahs of the optional Night Salah (Prayer) without it being restricted to a certain number. The Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet) for a Mu'min (believer) is to offer it two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on) along with offering Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) at the end of every two Rak'ahs. Among the evidence for this is the Hadith authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) by Ibn 'Umar

(Part No. 11; Page No. 321)

(may Allah be pleased with both of them) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ((Optional) Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).)

His saying (peace be upon him): (Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on)) denotes a command, as if he is saying: "Make prayer during the night consist of pairs of Rak'ahs." The words "two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs" imply that a person should offer Taslim after every two Rak'ahs and then conclude the Salah with one single Rak'ah as Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units), copying the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who used to do so as narrated by 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her), Ibn 'Abbas and others. 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to offer ten Rak'ahs at night, offering Taslim at the end of every two Rak'ahs, then offer a single Rak'ah as Witr.) She (may Allah be pleased with her) also said: (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) never prayed more than eleven Rak'ahs either in Ramadan or at any other time. He used to pray four Rak'ahs - do not ask me how beautiful or long they were - then pray (another) four Rak'ahs - do not ask me how beautiful or long they were - then he used to pray three.) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Some people thought that the mentioned four Rak'ahs are to be offered with one Taslim, but this is not true. It means that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer Taslim at the end of every two Rak'ahs as mentioned in her previous narration.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 322)

This is also complying with the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs) It is also authentically reported in the Sahih from the Hadith of Ibn 'Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer Taslim at the end of every two Rak'ahs.

However, her saying (may Allah be pleased with her): (He (peace be upon him) never prayed more than eleven Rak'ahs either in Ramadan or at any other time) indicates that the best regarding optional Night Salah in Ramadan or at any other time is to offer eleven Rak'ahs, in which a praying person offers Taslim after every two Rak'ahs then ends them with a single one as Witr. It is also authentically reported from her and others that he (peace be upon him) might have offered thirteen Rak'ahs as well.

This is the best and the most authentic narrations reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him); either to offer eleven Rak'ahs or thirteen, and the best of them is to offer eleven, but if a person offers thirteen, this is also a commendable act of Sunnah. Furthermore, this number of Rak'ahs will be much easier for people and much more supportive to the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) in attaining Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) during Ruku' (bowing), Sujud (prostration) and recitation of the Qur'an, with Tartil (slow recitation of the Qur'an) along with contemplating the meanings, with no rush during any of the performed acts. Yet, if a person offers twenty three Rak'ahs similar to the practice of 'Umar and other Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them) during some nights of Ramadan, this is also permissible. This is a matter that affords choice. Moreover, it is authentically reported that 'Umar and other Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) offered eleven Rak'ahs as reported in the Hadith of 'Aishah.

There are authentic reports that 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) observed both; for it is authentically reported that he ordered one of the Sahabah to offer eleven. It is also authentically reported that they offered twenty-three Rak'ahs according to his command. This proves the great flexibility in this matter

(Part No. 11; Page No. 323)

and that it was left open to the choice of the Sahabah, as indicated by the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs.)

However, the best is that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) did; either eleven or thirteen, and the best of both is to offer eleven Rak'ahs, for the previously mentioned report by 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her): (He (peace be upon him) never prayed more than eleven Rak'ahs either in Ramadan or at any other time) i.e., in most cases.

Since it is authentically reported from 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) and others that the Prophet (peace be upon him) also offered thirteen, this indicated that what she meant was the most frequent practice, for she used to observe and ask about the acts of the Prophet (peace be upon him) during his stay with her. She was the most knowledgeable and understanding amongst women of the Sunnah of the Messenger (peace be upon him). She also used to inform about what he (peace be upon him) used to do, what she saw, and ask the other Mothers of Believers and the Sahabah. Furthermore, she was very keen to learn. This is why she knew a great deal of knowledge and memorized many Hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) through her great memorization ability and by asking the other Sahabah about what they learned (may Allah pleased with them all). However, if a person offers eleven Rak'ahs in some nights and thirteen in some others, this act will also be complying with the Sunnah. There is nothing wrong in doing so. On the other hand, it is impermissible for a person to offer four Rak'ahs all together, but the Sunnah is to offer them two by two, according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): (Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs.)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 324)

This Hadith denotes a command. So, if a person offers Witr consisting of three or five Rak'ahs altogether, this is acceptable since the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that as well, but one should not offer four, six, or eight together because it is not authentically reported that he (peace be upon him) did that. It is also contradictory to his command: (Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs.)

However, it is permissible for a praying person to offer seven or nine consecutive Rak'ahs, but it is preferable to sit for the first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) in the sixth or eighth Rak'ah, and then stand up and complete the Salah.

All this is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him); he offered seven consecutive Rak'ahs without performing Tashahhud in between. The matter is flexible in this regard. But it is better to offer Taslim at the end of every two Rak'ahs and conclude the Salah with one single Rak'ah as Witr as previously mentioned in the Hadith of Ibn 'Umar: ((Optional) Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr.)

This is the best and most considerate of people as well, for some may have needs to fulfill, which urge them to leave after two Rak'ahs, two or three Taslims. Therefore, it is better and more proper for an Imam to offer the Salah in pairs of two rather than five or seven consecutive Rak'ahs. However, if an Imam does this sometimes to clarify that it is an act of Sunnah, this is acceptable. As for offering the Shaf` (two units of Prayer, particularly before the final unit of the odd-number prayer) and Witr as Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, this should not be done. The least that can be said about it is that it is Makruh (reprehensible), for it has been reported that it is forbidden to perform them as Maghrib Prayer; rather, they should be prayed as three consecutive Rak'ahs with performing Taslim once and Tashahhud once. Allah is the One Who grants success!

Finishing Tarawih Prayer with the Imam is a Sunnah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 325)

Q: If a person offers Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) behind an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) who prays it as twenty-three Rak'ahs and after praying eleven Rak'ahs, the person leaves the congregation, will this act be complying with the Sunnah?

A: The Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet) is to finish the Salah (Prayer) with the Imam, even if he offers twenty-three Rak'ahs, for the Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who prays Qiyam (optional Night Prayer) with the Imam until he finishes, Allah will record it for him as spending the whole night in prayer.﴿ According to another narration: ﴾The rest of their night﴿

Therefore, it is better for a Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) to continue praying with the Imam until he finishes, whether they offer eleven Rak'ahs, twenty-three Rak'ahs, or other numbers.

So, the best to be done is to continue with the Imam until he finishes. However, offering twenty-three Rak'ahs was observed by 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet). Accordingly, there is nothing wrong with this or violative of Sunnah. It was the practice of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, whose legitimacy is indicated by the Hadith narrated by Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that

(Part No. 11; Page No. 326)

the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾(Optional) Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).﴿ (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not specify a certain number Rak'ahs. He (peace be upon him) rather said: ﴾Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on).﴿

But, if the Imam restricts himself to praying eleven or thirteen Rak'ahs in Tarawih, it will be better; offering Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) in the end of every two Rak'ahs. This is the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at most times. This is more considerate of the people who are being led in Salah during Ramadan or at other times. But whoever offers more or less than this number of Rak'ahs, it is permissible, because the Rak'ahs of optional Night Salah is a matter open to choice. Allah is the One Who grants success!

Ruling on performing different numbers of Rak'ahs during Tarawih Prayers

(Part No. 11; Page No. 327)

Q: Is it better for the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) to diversify the number of Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) offered during Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) or should he always restrict himself to eleven Rak'ahs?

A: I do not know of anything wrong with this; if the Imam offers on some nights eleven Rak'ahs and on other nights thirteen Rak'ahs, there is nothing wrong with that. Likewise, if he offers more, it is permissible, for the Rak'ahs of optional Night Prayer is a matter that affords choice. However, if the Imam observes eleven Rak'ahs to practice and inculcate the Sunnah and for people to know the pattern he follows when praying to drive away the thought that he is forgetful, there is nothing wrong with this.

Seeking Imams of good voices in different Masjids

(Part No. 11; Page No. 328)

Q: What is the ruling on going to different Masjids seeking the sweet voice of the Imam to attain Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and attention of the heart?

A: The opinion which appears to be more correct, and Allah knows best, is that there is nothing wrong with that, if it is intended as a means that helps one acquire Khushu' and feel relief and tranquil at heart during Salah (Prayer), because not every voice relieves the ears. In case you intend to go and listen to so-and-so in order to perfect your Salah and gain submission, there is no blame. Moreover, this act may be praised and rewarded, according to the intention. A person may feel spiritual submission behind an Imam and does not feel the same behind another, because of the difference between the two recitations and the performed Salah. If one's intention to go to a remote Masjid is to listen to the Imam's sweet voice and benefit from that and to feel reverential humility during Salah, not just prompted by an inclination or to have a walk, but rather to gain benefit, knowledge and tranquility in Salah, there is nothing wrong with that. It is authentically reported in the Sahih (authentic) Hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: (The people who will earn the greatest reward for Salah are those who

(Part No. 11; Page No. 329)

walk the farthest to reach it (the Masjid), then the next farthest and so on.) If they intend to increase the steps they take (to and fro from the Masjid), this is also a good aim.

Q: What is the ruling on moving between Masjids; each night a person goes to a Masjid to listen to beautiful voices?

A: I do not know of anything wrong with that, although I prefer that one should stick to the Masjid in which the heart finds peace and feels Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship), because one may go to another Masjid in which one does not feel the same submission and tranquility. Therefore, I am more of the opinion, in accordance with the Shar'y (Islamic legal) rules, that one who finds an Imam they feel tranquil with and attain Khushu' when led by him in Salah and on hearing his recitation of the Qur'an, they should adhere to him and pray frequently with him. The matter is clear in this regard and there is nothing wrong with it, all praise be to Allah. If one moves to another Masjid to follow another Imam, we do not know of anything wrong with that either, as long as the intention is good and involves nothing else such as Riya' (doing good deeds for showing-off) or the like. But, what is closer to the Shar'y rules is to keep to the Masjid in which one feels Khushu' and tranquility, and hears good recitation, or in order to increase the number of people praying there, or to set a good example to others, or to benefit and remind people there if they lack sources of guidance and knowledge, or to deliver a lesson to them, in other words, one's presence is beneficial.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 330)

If this is the case, attendance in the Masjid where one may benefit or contribute, or feels more Khushu', tranquility and enjoys Salah, then all this is required.

Is it better to finish a Khatmah

during Tarawih Prayers?

Q: Is it better for the Imam to finish a Khatmah (one complete reading of the whole Qur'an) during Tarawih Prayers?

A: This is a matter open to choice. I know of no legal evidence supporting the preferability of completing one reading of the whole Qur'an in the course of Tarawih Prayers. However, some scholars said that it is Mustahab (desirable) to recite the whole Qur'an in the course of leading the congregation in prayers, in order for them to hear it all, but this is not supported by clear evidence. What is essential for the Imam is to be in a state of Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship), tranquility, and recite the Qur'an slowly and deliberately to benefit the people even if he did not make a Khatmah. If he only recites half or third of the Qur'an, his benefiting the people remains more important than making a Khatmah. It is important to be in a state of Khushu' and recite slowly, so that people would benefit and feel tranquility. If it is possible to finish a Khatmah, all praise is due to Allah; otherwise, what he recites is sufficient.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 331)

This is because it is important to help people attain Khushu' and benefit them. However, it is good if the Imam finishes a Khatmah without causing hardship, so that the whole Qur'an is heard.

Merit of finishing a Khatmah in Ramadan

Q: Does the fact that Jibril (peace be upon him) rehearsed the entire Qur'an with the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Ramadan mean that it is preferable to finish a Khatmah (one complete reading of the whole Qur'an) during Ramadan?

A: This shows that it is recommended for believers to study the meanings of the Qur'an with one who can benefit them, because the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) studied it with Jibril in order to benefit, for Jibril was sent by Allah and was the ambassador between Him and the Messengers.

Undoubtedly, Jibril would be able to teach the Prophet (peace be upon him) how to master the articulation of the letters of the Qur'an and understand its meanings as intended by Allah. It is important for Muslims to find someone who can help them understand the Qur'an and teach them how to properly pronounce its letters, just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) studied it with Jibril.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 332)

This does not mean that Jibril is superior to the Prophet (peace be upon him); rather, he is the Messenger sent by Allah to him (peace be upon him). His mission was to convey to the Prophet (peace be upon him) the Commands of Allah regarding the Qur'an, words and meanings. So the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) benefited from Jibril in this regard. It does not mean that Jibril is better than the Prophet (peace be upon him); rather, he (peace be upon him) is the best of mankind and better than angels (peace be upon them). This rehearsing and studying brought a great deal of benefit to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to the Ummah (Muslim community), because it is the study of what has been revealed by Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) to benefit from whatever good it conveys.

We can also conclude that studying with others at night is better than during the day, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) studied the Qur'an with Jibril at night. It is known that the heart is more attentive and can benefit better at night than during the day.

Other benefits that may be cited: the permissibility of mutual studying of the Qur'an, which constitutes a righteous deed even at times other than Ramadan, because it brings benefit to both parties. If there are more than two people, it is all right, because each one can benefit from and encourage the other to recite. This will inspire enthusiasm among them, for a person sitting alone reciting may not be so active, but when having in their company one or more companion studying with them, this is will be more supportive and effective in encouraging them to recite. This is besides the great benefit that all of them will find in studying together and discussing things that they may not understand, etc.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 333)

All of this brings a great deal of good.

It may also be understood from this that reciting the whole Qur'an to the congregation in Ramadan is a form of collective studying, because in this way they will benefit from hearing the entire Qur'an. Therefore, Imam Ahmad (may Allah be merciful to him) used to like to finish a Khatmah in the course of leading people in Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan). This is an instance of what the Salaf (righteous predecessors) used to do, for they loved to hear the entire Qur'an. However, this is not an obligatory matter; therefore, it should not make the Imam hasten in reciting the Qur'an. Rather, the Imam should maintain a state of Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and tranquility; paying attention to this is more important than concerning oneself with completing the Qur'an.

Finishing a Khatmah in Tarawih and Tahajjud is a good deed

Q: Many Imams (the ones who lead congregational Prayer) are keen to finish a Khatmah (one complete reading of the whole Qur'an) in Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) and Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer) to let the congregation hear the entire Qur'an. Is there anything in this?

A: This is a good deed as the Imam recites a Juz' (a 30th of the Qur'an) or less each night, then recites more during the last ten nights to complete the recitation of the entire Qur'an.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 334)

This applies if it is easy for the Imam to do so without any hardship. Similarly, the Du'a' (supplication) after Khatmah was recited by many of the Salaf (righteous predecessors). It was authentically reported that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) - the servant of the Prophet (peace be upon him) - used to do so. This yields much good. It is prescribed for the congregation to say "Amen" after the Du'a' of the Imam, hoping that Allah may accept their deeds. The great scholar Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) wrote a chapter in his book "Jala' Al-Afham fi'l-Salati wa'l-Salam 'ala Khair Al-Anam", in which he described how the Salaf were keen to complete the Qur'an; we advise you to read this chapter in order to learn more.

Q: The Imam is not capable of reciting the whole Qur'an due to pain. What is your opinion on this?

A: There is no blame on him, as this is a matter open to choice, praise be to Allah. If the Imam completes a Khatmah, it is better in order to let the congregation hear the entire Qur'an and gain great reward in this holy month. If an impediment arises and it is not possible for the Imam to complete the Qur'an, there is nothing wrong with that. It is prescribed for the Imam to be considerate of the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer). He should be kind to them and not to cause them hardship. If long recitation is difficult for them, he should not persist in it. He should shorten it in order to encourage them to attend congregational Salah (Prayer) and not to abandon coming altogether. It is better to offer eleven or thirteen Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) while observing Tartil (slow recitation of the Qur'an) and tranquility in Ruku' (bowing) and Sujud (prostration) than to offer many Rak'ahs without tranquility. But if the Imam offers twenty or more, it is impermissible. However, it is better to offer just eleven or thirteen Rak'ahs, for it was not reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered more than that.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 335)

'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) never prayed more than eleven Rak'ahs either in Ramadan or at any other time.) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

It was also authentically reported on the authority of 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) and Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) (Prayed thirteen Rak'ahs (of supererogatory Salah) on some nights.) The Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them) during the time of 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) would sometimes offer twenty-three Rak'ahs and at other times eleven Rak'ahs. This indicates flexibility and legality.

Q: What is your opinion - may Allah protect you - about determining a portion of the Qur'an to be recited in each Rak'ah (unit of Prayer) and on each night as some Imams (the ones who lead congregational Prayer) do?

A: I do not see anything wrong with that, because it depends on the Imam's own assessment of the situation. If he thinks it is better to recite more on some nights and in some Rak'ahs, and that this will benefit those who are praying behind him, and he feels that he has the energy for that and enjoys the recitation and wants to recite more Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) to benefit himself and others, then he may do so. If his voice is good and he begins to enjoy the recitation and feels humble, calm and focused, it will benefit him and those who are praying behind him. Then, if he recites some extra Ayahs in some Rak'ahs or on some nights, I do not know of any reason why he should not do so.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 336)

The issue is open to choice, praise be to Allah.

Consideration of the condition of weak people

during Tarawih

Q: Should the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) take into consideration the condition of the weak like old people and their like in Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan)?

A: This is something which is required in all Salahs (Prayers), whether in Tarawih or in obligatory Salahs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (Whoever among you leads people in Salah, let him lighten it because there are among them the sick, the weak, and the those who have things they need to do.) So the Imam should be considerate of the Ma'mums (persons being led by an Imam in Prayer) and be kind to them in the optional Night Salah offered during Ramadan and in the last ten days of it. The people are not all the same, they vary. So he should consider their state and encourage them to attend the Salahs.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 337)

When the Imam makes his recitations too long, he will make it difficult for the Ma'mums and this will discourage them from attending. He should pay attention to the way which will encourage them to attend and make them want to come and pray, even if that is by shortening the length of Salah and avoiding prolongation. Salah in which people feel Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and is performed tranquilly, even if it is short, is better than a Salah in which they do not concentrate properly and become bored and languid.

Criteria for not prolonging Salah

Q: What is the standard criterion for not prolonging Salah (Prayer), as some people complain of lengthy recitation?

A: Consideration is to be given to the majority of the congregation and weak people. If the majority prefers that the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) prolong the recitation and no one among them is weak, ill or elderly, there is nothing wrong with this. If there is among them the weak, sick or elderly, the Imam should take them all into consideration.

It was reported on the authority of 'Uthman ibn Abu Al-'As that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: (You are their Imam, but follow the weakest of them.)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 338)

In another Hadith: (for the weak and the old pray behind him.) What is meant is taking into consideration the condition of the weak with regard to avoiding prolongation in recitation, Ruku' (bowing) and Sujud (prostration); but if they have approximate conditions, he should give priority to the majority.

Difference between Tarawih and Qiyam

and prolonging recitation on the last ten nights of Ramadan

Q: Is there a difference between Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) and Qiyam (standing for optional Prayer at night)? Is there evidence to support singling out the last ten days of Ramadan with lengthy standing, bowing, and prostrating during Salah (Prayer)?

A: Any Salah performed at night during Ramadan is called Qiyam, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who spends the nights of Ramadan in Qiyam (standing for optional Prayer at night), out of Iman (Faith) and Ihtisab (confident anticipation of Allah's Reward), will have their past sins forgiven.﴿ If a person stands for optional Night Salah with the Imam for as long as they can, this is called Qiyam.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 339)

However, on the last ten days of Ramadan, it is Mustahab (desirable) to prolong Salah, for it is prescribed to offer Salah and recite Qur'an and make Du'a' (supplication) during them. The Messenger (peace be upon him) ﴾used to stay awake the whole night (for prayer and devotion) during the last ten days of Ramadan.﴿ Accordingly, it is prescribed to prolong Salah during the last ten days of Ramadan, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾On some nights, he (peace be upon him) recited Surah Al-Baqarah, Al-Nisa' and Al-'Imran in one Rak'ah.﴿ What is meant is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to prolong Salah on the last ten days of Ramadan and spend the whole night in worship, so it is prescribed for people to imitate him on those ten days, unlike the first twenty days in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not stay awake all night; rather, he would offer Salah and sleep as reported in the Hadiths. With regard to the last ten days of Ramadan, he (peace be upon him) used to offer Salah all night and would awaken his wives and tighten his Izar (i.e. exert himself in worship and abstain from conjugal intercourse), for among these last ten days there is a blessed night - Laylat-ul-Qadr (the Night of Decree).

Permissibility of reading from the Mus-haf during Salah

Q: What is the ruling on the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) reading from the Mus-haf (Qur'an-book)?

A: There is nothing wrong with this, according to the most preponderant opinion of scholars. Nevertheless, there is disagreement among scholars regarding this issue.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 340)

The soundest opinion, however, is that there is nothing wrong with reading from the Mus-haf if the Imam has not memorized the Qur'an or his memorization is weak and reading from the Mus-haf is more useful to people and to himself. Al-Bukhari (may Allah be merciful to him) wrote a comment in his Sahih (Authentic Hadith Book) about 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that her freed slave, Dhakwan, used to lead her in night Salah (Prayer) and read from the Mus-haf.

The original ruling is permissibility of this act, which is supported by the Athar (narration from a Companion) of 'Aishah. However, if there is a person who memorizes well, it is better to let him lead the Salah, for this causes the heart to be more attentive and removed from distraction, as carrying a Mus-haf involves putting it down and raising it and turning its pages, so it should be the last resort if it cannot be avoided. If it can be dispensed with, this would be much better.

The Ma'mum holding the Mus-haf in Tarawih

Q: What is the ruling on the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) carrying the Mus-haf (Qur'an-book) during Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan)?

A: I do not know of any basis for this. The preponderant opinion is that they should observe Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) with tranquility and should not hold the Mus-haf; rather, they should place the right hand over the left as is the Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet),

(Part No. 11; Page No. 341)

with the right hand over the left wrist and forearm and placing them over the chest. This is the most preponderant opinion and the best. Holding the Mus-haf distracts from these acts of Sunnah. The heart and eyes may become busy following the words on the pages and this distracts them from listening to the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). I think that not doing so is the Sunnah. The praying person should listen attentively and not hold the Mus-haf. If they have knowledge, they will be able to correct the Imam; otherwise, others will correct him. Should the Imam make a mistake and is not corrected, it does not matter, unless it is in Surah (Qur'anic chapter) Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an). It matters only in Al-Fatihah, because it is an essential pillar of the Salah (Prayer). However, if the Imam omits some Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) other than Al-Fatihah, this does not matter if there is no one praying behind him who can alert him to that. If someone holds the Mus-haf to correct the Imam when necessary, perhaps there is nothing wrong with that. But if each person holds a Mus-haf, this is contrary to the Sunnah.

Q: When offering Salah (Prayer) behind an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) some worshippers follow his recitation by looking at the Mus-haf (Qur'an-book) during Salah. Is there any wrong with this?

A: The opinion that seems right to me is that this act should not be done. It is better to devote one's attention to Salah with Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship), placing the hands on the chest and meditating on what the Imam is reciting. Allah (may He be Exalted and Glorified) says: ﴾So, when the Qur'ân is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy. [i.e. during the compulsory congregational prayers when the Imâm (of a mosque) is leading the prayer (except Sûrat Al-Fâtihah), and also when he is delivering the Friday-prayer Khutbah]. (Tafsir At-Tabari).﴿ Allah also says:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 342)

﴾Successful indeed are the believers.﴿ ﴾Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴿ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The Imam is appointed to be followed; so when he pronounces Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]"), you should also say it and when he recites (the Qur'an), listen attentively.﴿

Weeping aloud during Salah

Q: Respected Shaykh, what is your opinion regarding those who weep aloud during Salah (Prayer)?

A: I have advised many people who call me to beware of this matter, because it should not be done. It annoys and confuses worshippers, as well as the reciter. Therefore, a believer should try to make their weeping unheard to others and be on guard against Riya' (showing-off) which Satan seeks to cast one into and not to cause disturbance to people by their voice or distract them.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 343)

It is known that some may unintentionally be overcome by tears and these are excused, but we speak of those who do so intentionally. It is authentically reported that (when the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited the Qur'an his chest sounded like a boiling kettle due to his weeping.) Moreover, it is reported that when Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) recited the Qur'an, people could not hear him because of his weeping and it is related that 'Umar wept until his sobbing was heard from behind the rows. However, this does not mean that they deliberately wept aloud, but they were overcome with emotion out of fear of Allah (may He be Exalted and Glorified). Consequently, if one is involuntarily overcome by emotion, one is not to blame.

The Imam repeating

Ayahs that speak of Mercy or Punishment

Q: What is the ruling on repeating some Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) that speak of mercy or punishment by the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer)?

A: I do not know of anything wrong with this, as it encourages worshippers to ponder, maintain Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship), and benefit. It is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) repeated several times the Ayah: ("If You punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, verily You, only You, are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.")

(Part No. 11; Page No. 344)

In conclusion, if it is done for a good purpose and not to show off, then there is nothing wrong with it. But if the Imam thinks that repeating it may annoy some or create disturbance such as weeping, then it is best not to do so to avoid distraction. If repeating it leads to acquiring Khushu', pondering the meanings, and focusing on the Salah (Prayer), then it is all good.

Repeating the Ayahs that mention Allah's Attributes

Q: What is the ruling on repeating Ayat-ul-Sifat (Qur'anic verses including Allah's Attributes)?

A: I do not know of anything reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard; there are no detailed directions on that issue from the Prophet (peace be upon him). No differentiation is made between Ayat-ul-Sifat and the other Ayahs, as far as we know. Such Ayahs may stir weeping and Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) when being recited. There is no doubt that Ayat-ul-Sifat have their impact and cause weeping, because they remind one of the Glory of Allah and His Great Munificence, which makes one weep. An example is Allah's Saying (Glorified and Exalted be He): ﴾Indeed, your Lord is Allâh, Who created the heavens and the earth in Six Days, and then He rose over (Istawâ) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty). He brings the night as a cover over the day, seeking it rapidly﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 345)

Deliberating carefully on this Ayah drives one to weep and feel Khushu' out of the fear of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). The same applies to similar Ayahs, for example: ﴾He is Allâh, beside Whom Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He) the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.﴿ ﴾He is Allâh beside Whom Lâ ilâha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the King, the Holy, the One Free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allâh! (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with Him.﴿ All such Ayahs stir weeping, because they remind one of the Glory of Allah and His perfect Benevolence to His servants as well as the perfect meaning of such Attributes. All this influences one in a way that drives one to weep. Pondering the Ayahs in which Allah's Names and Attributes are mentioned is as important as pondering the Ayahs in which Paradise and Hellfire are mentioned and in which mercy and torment are mentioned: ﴾When the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited an Ayah of glorification, he used to glorify Allah when performing night Salah, and when he recited an Ayah of torment, he used to stop and seek refuge with Allah from the torment, and when he recited an Ayah of good reward, he used to supplicate (to Allah to grant him such a reward).﴿ (Narrated by Hudhayfah from the Prophet [peace be upon him]) It is an act of his Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) to supplicate to Allah upon hearing the Ayahs of hope, seek refuge with Allah upon hearing the Ayahs inspiring fear, and glorify Him upon hearing the Names and Attributes of Allah.

Weeping upon supplication and recitation of the Qur'an

(Part No. 11; Page No. 346)

Q: What is the ruling on those who cry when supplicating to Allah and not when hearing the Qur'an?

A: Weeping does not occur voluntarily, for one may be moved to tears by Du'a' (supplication) and not by some Ayahs (Qur'anic Verses), but one is required to remedy themselves and have Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) during recitation more than supplication, for the former is more important although Khushu' in both is required. Khushu' during supplication is among the causes for having it answered. However, one should pay more attention to the recitation of the Qur'an, as it is Allah's Word that brings guidance and light. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to ponder and meditate over the Qur'an. Similarly, the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them) used to weep while reciting it. Therefore, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him): ('Recite (the Qur'an) to me.' 'Abdullah said, 'How can I recite to you while you are the one upon whom the Qur'an was sent down?' He (peace be upon him) said, 'I like to listen to it from others.' He recited to him from the beginning of Surah Al-Nisa' until he reached the part in which Allah says: (How (will it be) then, when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) as a witness against these people?)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 347)

Upon that, he (peace be upon him), said, 'Enough!' Ibn Mas'ud said, 'When I turned to him, his eyes were overflowing with tears.')

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud meant that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was overcome by emotion silently, for he knew this by the tears in eyes of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Another Hadith was related on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn Al-Shikhkhir that he (heard a sound from the chest of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which sounded like a boiling kettle due to his weeping.) This Hadith indicates that one's weeping may be heard, without disturbing those around us.

Ruling on pretending to weep

Q: What is the ruling on pretentious weeping? What about the authenticity of the reports related in this regard?

A: It is related in some Hadiths: (If you cannot weep, act as if you are weeping.) but, I do not know about its authenticity. It is related by Ahmad, but I do not recall

(Part No. 11; Page No. 348)

the authenticity of the addition mentioned here: (If you cannot weep, act as if you are weeping.) It is commonly circulated among the scholars, but it needs further caution, because I do not remember at present the condition of its Sanad (chain of narrators). The opinion which appears to be more correct is that there should be no affectation and even when one weeps, one should try not to disturb others. Rather, one should shed tears quietly without bothering anyone as much as possible.

Taghanny when reciting the Qur'an

Q: What is meant by Taghanny (beautifying the voice) when reciting the Qur'an?

A: The authentic Sunnah (acts, sayings or approvals of the Prophet) encourages Taghanny when reciting the Qur'an, which means to recite it in a sweet, pleasant voice. It does not mean to recite it in a singing way, but to enhance and beautify one's voice while reciting the Qur'an. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Allah does not listen to anything as He listens to a Prophet with a beautiful voice reciting the Qur'an out loud.﴾ Moreover, it is reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿Not of us; the one who does not beautify the voice when reciting the Qur'an.﴾

(Part No. 11; Page No. 349)

The Hadith refers to beautifying the voice while reciting as mentioned previously.

The statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): "Allah does not listen to anything as He listens to..." does not imply that Allah resembles creation, but His Hearing befits Him and does not bear any resemblance to the attributes of creatures. This principle applies to all Attributes of Allah in a way that befits His Majesty. There is nothing similar to Him (may He be Exalted and Glorified) in anything. He (Exalted be He) says: ﴿There is nothing like Him; and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.﴾ Taghanny signifies to recite the Qur'an aloud in a sweetened voice, and to observe Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) while reciting it to move the hearts. What is important is to touch the hearts with the Qur'an to feel submission and peace, and benefit from the Qur'an. It is reported from Abu Musa Al-Ash'ary (may Allah be pleased with him) ﴿that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by him while he was reciting the Qur'an, so the Prophet listened to him and said, 'This (man) has been endowed with a beautiful voice like the beautiful voices of the family of Dawud (David).' When Abu Musa came and the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him of that, he said, 'Had I known that you were listening to my recitation, I would have indeed embellished it for you.'﴾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not object to that, which indicates that beautifying the voice, enhancing it, and paying attention to proper recitation of the Qur'an are required.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 350)

This brings about Khushu' to both the reciter and listeners, so that all of them benefit from the Qur'an.

Shortest permissible period for reciting the entire Qur'an

Q: What is the shortest period permitted for reciting the entire Qur'an?

A: There is no limited time for this, but it is preferable not to recite the whole of the Qur'an in less than three days, in compliance with the Hadith narrated by 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The person who reads the whole Qur'an in less than three days will not understand.﴿

Accordingly, a Muslim while reciting the Qur'an should seek to feel Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship), observe Tartil (slow recitation of the Qur'an), and ponder over the meanings. It is not important to read a lot of it, but the aim is to avail of the reading. It is recommended to recite much of the Qur'an during Ramadan, following the example of the Salaf (Righteous predecessors), but with meditation and concentration. If a Muslim recites the whole of the Qur'an during three days, it is good. Some Salaf said that especially virtuous times are excluded from the aforementioned Hadith and there is nothing wrong with finishing the recitation of the whole Qur'an every night or day.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 351)

They mentioned that Al-Shafi'y and other Imams did so. However, the explicit meaning of the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) is that there is no difference in this regard between the month of Ramadan and other times. One should not recite the Qur'an in haste, but maintain tranquility. For this reason, that is, slow and deliberate reading, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr, saying: ﴾Recite it (the Qur'an) in seven days.﴿ This is the last instruction of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to 'Abdullah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾The person who reads the whole Qur'an in less than three days will not understand.﴿ He (peace be upon him) did not exclude Ramadan. Therefore, the Salaf interpreting it to be applicable to other times than Ramadan is debatable and Allah knows best. It is prescribed for a believer to devote attention to the Qur'an and strive to recite it in a correct and appropriate way, pondering and paying attention to its meanings without rush. Therefore, it is preferable not to recite the whole of the Qur'an in less than three days. This is what ought to be done, according to what is mentioned in the Sunnah, even during Ramadan.

Fixed payment for leading people in Tarawih

Q: What is the ruling on the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) who requests a particular payment to lead worshippers in Salah (Prayer), especially that he must travel to distant places to lead them in Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan)?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 352)

A: A specific amount should not be requested, as a group of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) regarded it as Makruh (reprehensible). But there is nothing wrong if people help the Imam with an unspecified amount. As for Salah itself, it is valid and there nothing wrong with it, In sha'a-Allah (if Allah wills), even if they specify the amount of financial aid, because the Imam may be compelled by necessity to do so. However, the preferable and safer course of action, according to a group of the Salaf, for the Imam not to do so and not to stipulate the amount of aid. This opinion is supported by the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying to 'Uthman ibn Abu Al-'As (may Allah be pleased with him): (Appoint a Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) who does not take payment for announcing the Adhan.) If this is the case with the Mu'adhin, the Imam is more called to it.

The point is, it is improper to impose conditions for undertaking the task of leading worshippers in Salah. It is better that the people attending the congregation help the Imam with paying his carfare, but without imposed conditions.

Constant reciting of certain Surahs during Tahajjud

(Part No. 11; Page No. 353)

Q: What is the ruling on reciting Surah Al-A'la, Surah Al-Kafirun, and Surah Al-Ikhlas in the last three Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) of Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer) regularly? Are there Hadiths reported about reciting the last three Surahs of the Qur'an in the last single Rak'ah of Tahajjud which is offered as Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units)?

A: This is preferable; however, if the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) omits it at times to let people know that it is not Wajib (obligatory), it is good as well. Otherwise, it is better to follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who used to recite in the three Rak'ahs offered as Witr: Surah Al-A'la, Surah Al-Kafirun, and Surah Al-Ikhlas which begins with the Words of Allah: ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴿ If one sometimes abandons this lest people should think it is Wajib, there is no problem. It is reported that some Salaf (righteous predecessors) did not object to abandoning reciting Surah Al-Sajdah and Surah Al-Insan which begins with: ﴾Has there not been over man a period of time﴿ in Fajr (Dawn) Prayer on Friday to inform people that it is not an obligation in spite of its being an act of Sunnah to read them every Friday in Fajr Prayer.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 354)

However, if an Imam avoids reciting them sometimes to let people know that reciting these Surahs is not Wajib, there is no blame on him. This is similar to the previously mentioned case of not reciting in the three Rak'ahs of Witr Surah Al-A'la, Surah Al-Kafirun, and Surah Al-Ikhlas that begins with: ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴿ However, it is recommended for the Imam to recite them often and in most cases. As for reciting the last three Surahs (Chapters: 112, 113, 114 of the Qur'an) in the last Rak'ahs of Witr, the Hadith mentioned in this regard is Da'if (weak). The authentically reported Hadith is just to recite after Surah Al-Fatihah Surah Al-Ikhlas which begins with: ﴾Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴿ in the single Rak'ah offered as Witr.

Ruling on Du'a' Khatm Al-Qur'an

Q: What is the ruling on Du'a' Khatm Al-Qur'an (supplication said upon completing the recitation of the whole Qur'an)?

A: The Salaf (righteous predecessors) used to make Du'a' (supplication) following the completion of reciting the whole Qur'an in Ramadan prayers. We do not know of any disagreement among the scholars in this regard. The more correct opinion is that it is permissible to recite this Du'a', but without burdening worshippers by prolonged standing. The Imam should try his best to choose beneficial and comprehensive invocations as 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 355)

(The Prophet (peace be upon him) liked Jawami' Al-Du'a' (concise yet comprehensive supplications) and discarded others.)

Therefore, it is better that the Imam uses concise yet comprehensive words in Du'a' Khatm Al-Qur'an and Qunut (supplication recited while standing after bowing in the last unit of Prayer) and not to overburden worshippers with a lengthy Du'a'. He may recite: "O Allah! Guide us among those whom You have guided ...", as stated in the Hadith narrated by Al-Hasan ibn Aly concerning Qunut. He may say along with it other good Du'a's as 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) did, but must avoid being rhetorical or lengthy, and not to cause hardship to worshippers by long standing. The comprehensive Du'a' made by the Imam following the completion of reciting the whole Qur'an is to be started by the mention of Allah and invocation of blessings upon our Prophet (peace be upon him). The Imam may complete the recitation of the whole Qur'an and conclude it with Du'a' either in optional night Salah (Prayer) or Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) without prolongation or hardship to worshippers.

This is a well-known act of the Salaf and was transmitted from one generation to another. Thus, our shaykhs who firmly adhered to the Sunnah and patterned their actions after its teachings used to do this. It was passed on from the first to the last generations. It is well-known to the Imams who diligently observe the Sunnah and are keen to preserve it. To conclude, it is permissible to make Du'a' upon completing the recitation of the whole Qur'an. There is nothing wrong with it; rather, it is Mustahab (desirable), because it is a way of seeking the opportune times when Du'a' is most likely to be answered, for it is done after complete reciting of the whole Qur'an. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) used to gather his family upon completing his reciting of the Qur'an and supplicate to Allah outside Salah. The case in Salah takes the same ruling, because Du'a' is permissible during and after Salah. Making Du'a' is among the acts permissible in Salah, so it is not disapproved.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 356)

It is known that Du'a' during Salah is required upon reciting the Ayahs speaking of torment or mercy; so a praying person should follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who used to do so in night Salah and supplicate to Allah at them. Thus, this Du'a', similar in purpose, is permissible after reciting the entire Qur'an. If the Du'a' is outside Salah, there is no disagreement among scholars that it is recommended after reciting the entire Qur'an. As for recent disagreement and inquiry over making this Du'a' during Salah, I do not know of any of the Salaf who disapproved of it during Salah or any scholar who denied this outside Salah. The proof to be relied upon is that this act is well-accepted by the Salaf which was practiced by the first and passed on to the last generations. Anyone claiming that it is Munkar (rejected), should present the evidence, not the one who follow the example of the Salaf. The evidence should be established against those who deny the act and say: It is Munkar or Bid'ah (innovation in religion). This is the way which the Salaf adopted generation after generation including the scholars, pious people, and Hadith narrators. The practice of Du'a' during Salah is well-known from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the night Salah, so this Du'a' should be considered as akin to it.

Should Du'a' Khatm Al-Qur'an be made before or after Ruku'?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 357)

Q: What is the correct position of saying Du'a' Khatm Al-Qur'an (supplication said upon completing the recitation of the whole Qur'an)? Should it be recited before or after Ruku' (bowing)?

A: It would better if a praying person recites this Du'a' after completing the recitation of Al-Mu'awwidhatayn (Surahs Al-Falaq and Al-Nas) i.e., after completing the recitation of the whole Qur'an, he starts saying the Du'a' he knows at any time during Salah, whether in the first, second, or last Rak'ah (unit of Prayer). All these are permitted. It is important that he should first complete the recitation of the whole Qur'an and then make the Du'a'. It is an act of Sunnah to be brief in making Du'a' and to only use Jawami' Al-Du'a' (concise yet comprehensive supplications) in Qunut (supplication recited while standing after bowing in the last unit of Prayer) and Du'a' Khatm Al-Qur'an.

It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾made Qunut before and after Ruku'.﴿ But the more frequent practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is Qunut after Ruku'. Du'a' Khatm Al-Qur'an takes the same ruling of Qunut made in Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units), for it is made for completing the recitation of the whole Qur'an. Thus, when the reason for it exists, it is permissible to observe Qunut.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 358)

Qunut is made in the last Rak'ah after rising from Ruku', according to the manner reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him). The reason for this Du'a' is that Allah has bestowed upon a person a great blessing of completing the recitation of the whole Qur'an. So, one should be grateful to Allah and ask Him to be guided by His Book and be among those who regularly recite and act upon the Qur'an. They should also ask Allah to help them be mindful and grateful to Him and rectify their heart and deeds. This is because it follows the completion of a righteous deed as at the end of Salah, before concluding it with Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) where great invocations are said, after having completed Salah by the Grace of Allah. The same is true with the Witr. A praying person makes Qunut after completing and perfecting Salah.

Ruling on specifying a certain formula of Du'a' to be said after finishing a Khatmah

Q: Is there a specific Du'a' (supplication) to be said after finishing a Khatmah (one complete reading of the whole Qur'an)? What about the authenticity of the Du'a' attributed to Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah confer mercy upon him)?

A: According to my knowledge, there is no proof on specifying a certain Du'a' for this.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 359)

Consequently, it is permissible for a Muslim on this occasion to ask Allah for whatever they need and choose beneficial supplications such as seeking forgiveness of sins, winning Paradise, safety from Hellfire, imploring Allah's Protection against troubles, begging to be granted the correct understanding of the Qur'an in the way that pleases Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He), invoking His Help to act upon the Qur'an and memorize it, and the like. It is reported that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) used to gather his family upon completing the recitation of the whole Qur'an and supplicate to Allah.

However, to my knowledge, there is nothing reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard.

With regard to the Du'a' attributed to Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah confer mercy upon him), I know nothing concerning its authenticity, but it is well-known among our shaykhs and other scholars. However, I have not found it in any of his books. Allah knows best!

Seeking the times of finishing Khatmahs in Masjids

(Part No. 11; Page No. 360)

Q: What is the ruling on seeking the times of concluding a Khatmah (one complete reading of the whole Qur'an) in Masjids (mosques)?

A: This depends on the cause underlying this act; if those who do so seek to have their Du'a' (supplication) answered, for Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) promised to respond to Du'a' either by fulfillment or not. As for those who move from one Masjid to another with the good intention of being among those worshippers whose Du'a' is promised to be answered, hoping that Allah may respond to them, there is nothing wrong in doing so, for this good purpose and virtuous intention, hoping that Allah will bestow good upon them by doing so and accept their Du'a' while with them.

Ruling on traveling to Makkah and Al-Madinah to attend Khatmah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 361)

Q: What is the ruling on traveling to Makkah and Al-Madinah to attend Khatmah (completing of one reading of the whole Qur'an)?

A: According to Ijma' (consensus of scholars), traveling to Makkah or Al-Madinah is an act of obedience and drawing closer to Allah, whether to perform 'Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) or to offer Salah (Prayer) in Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) or Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah) in Ramadan or any other month. Also, there is nothing wrong with traveling to attend Khatmah, because it is part of offering Salah in the Two Holy Mosques and may be accompanied with performing 'Umrah. Thus, it is a good action leading to another.

Ruling on Imams who travel after finishing a Khatmah to perform 'Umrah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 362)

Q: What is the opinion of your Eminence on some Imams (those who lead congregational Prayer) who entrust someone to replace them in leading Salah (Prayer) in the last days of Ramadan after finishing a Khatmah (one complete reading of the whole Qur'an) to perform 'Umrah (lesser pilgrimage)?

A: The opinion that seems correct to me is that there should be no restrictions in this matter. It should be left flexible, especially if the Imam chooses a righteous substitute who can recite and pray as well as or even better than him. This is a very flexible matter. That is to say, it is permissible as long as the Imam chooses a righteous deputy who has a good voice and can properly recite the Qur'an. On the other hand, if the Imam hastens in his Salah or rushes in finishing the recitation in a way that becomes hard for those who pray led by him because of 'Umrah, this is unacceptable. Rather, he should perform the Salah calmly and unhurriedly along with observing Khushu' (the heart being attuned to the act of worship) and reciting in a smooth way, even if this hinders him from performing 'Umrah or finishing a Khatmah, since this serves a public benefit to his people and whoever offers Salah with him.

Is it better to recite the Qur'an or offer optional Salah during the day in Ramadan?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 363)

Q: Which is better during the daytime of Ramadan: Reciting the Qur'an or offering optional Salah (Prayer)?

A: The exemplary conduct of the Prophet (peace be upon him) during Ramadan was to offer much of different acts of 'Ibadah (worship). Jibril (Gabriel, peace be upon him) used to rehearse the Qur'an with the Prophet (peace be upon him) every night of Ramadan. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) met Jibril, he used to be more generous in giving than the freely blowing wind. He was the most generous of all people and used to reach the peak of generosity during Ramadan. At that time, he would give more Sadaqah (voluntary charity), do more acts of kindness, recite more Qur'an, make more Dhikr (remembrance of Allah), offer more Salah (Prayer), and spend time in I'tikaf (seclusion for worship in a Masjid). This is the guidance of the Messenger (peace be upon him) in this aspect and during this holy month.

As for the best of the two: reciting the Qur'an or offering optional Salah; this depends on people's circumstances, and the true evaluation of this lies with Allah alone, Who is the Most knowledgeable of all things.

Is it better to recite the Qur'an or listen to it on tapes?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 364)

Q: Is it better to recite the Qur'an or listen to one of the Qur'an reciters on a tape recording?

A: It is better for one to do what softens more the heart and affects it regardless whether it is reciting or listening. The purpose of the recitation is to contemplate, understand the meaning, and act according to what is taught by the Glorious Book of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He). Allah (may He be Praised) says: ﴾(This is) a Book (the Qur'ân) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember.﴿ Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾Verily, this Qur'ân guides to that which is most just and right﴿ Allah (may He be Praised) also says: ﴾Say: "It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing."﴿

Important note regarding the way of performing Tarawih

(Part No. 11; Page No. 365)

In the name of Allah, all praise is due to Allah, and may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions, and those who follow his guidance.

I was informed that some Imams (those who lead congregational Prayer) in Masjids (mosques), may Allah guide them to what is right, offer four consecutive Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) during Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) with one Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), followed by another four consecutive Rak'ahs with one Taslim. I was also informed that some Imams offer eight consecutive Rak'ahs with one Taslim. They think that this is what 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) meant by her saying in the Sahih (authentic) Hadith: ﴾He (peace be upon him) used to pray four Rak'ahs incomparable in perfection and long submission. He then prayed four Rak'ahs incomparable in perfection and long submission, and then he would pray three Rak'ahs.﴿

This understanding is not correct and is contrary to the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet). The correct interpretation is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer four Rak'ahs, and conclude every two Rak'ahs with Taslim, but 'Aishah aimed at the perfection of performance and long duration of praying and did not intend that the four Rak'ahs were offered with one Taslim.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 366)

The proof on that is the Hadith reported on her authority in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) in which she said: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer ten Rak'ahs at night, concluding every two Rak'ahs with Taslim, then he would pray one Rak'ah as Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).﴿ The Hadiths narrated by 'Aishah explain one another.

It is not permissible to explain the Hadiths of 'Aishah that have general meanings with other than those of hers that are specific and explanatory. Also, this is substantiated by what is related in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) from the Hadith of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾(Optional) Night Salah is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), and when one of you fears the break of dawn (Fajr Prayer), let them offer a single Rak'ah to make the Salah they have offered Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units).﴿ This Prophetic statement implies an obligation to offer Salah during the night in the form of pair of Rak'ahs.

Consequently, it is prescribed for the believer, whether male or female, to abide by the explanation of the teachings of Sunnah concerning the manner of performing night Salah and to keep away from what opposes it. It is evident that ending Salah with Taslim after every two Rak'ahs provides ease for people along with being consistent with the Sunnah.

However, if the praying person wants to perform three or five Rak'ahs together with one Taslim and sit for Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer) once in the last Rak'ah of them, there is nothing wrong with this, for it is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do so at times.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 367)

Similarly, the praying person may offer Witr as seven consecutive Rak'ahs with one Taslim. It is also permissible to offer seven Rak'ahs, in which one sits for the first Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position) in the sixth Rak'ah and then stand up to offer the seventh Rak'ah. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so.

Moreover, there is nothing wrong if the praying person offers nine Rak'ahs together and sits in the eighth one to perform the first Tashahhud and then stand to perform the ninth Rak'ah, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) did so.

However, the best and more perfect form is to make Taslim after every two Rak'ahs as mentioned previously. It should be noted that it is not permissible to offer three Rak'ahs as Witr in the way one offers Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer; to sit after the second Rak'ah, say the first Tashahhud, and perform a third Rak'ah after that, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade making Witr in performance like Maghrib. Indeed, I wrote this out of the necessity of giving advice, illustrating the Sunnah, exhorting to good and cooperation in righteousness and piety. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

'Abdul 'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baz

General Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

and the Chairman of Council of Senior Scholars and the Department of Scholarly research and Ifta'

Tahajjud during Ramadan and other times is after Sunnah Ratibah following 'Isha' Prayer

(Part No. 11; Page No. 368)

Q: After concluding 'Isha' (Night) Prayer, people offer the two supererogatory Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) before starting Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan). Respected Shaykh, why does the Imam not start offering Tarawih Prayer without offering these two supererogatory Rak'ahs?

A: According to the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet), Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer) during Ramadan or any other time is to be offered after Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) of 'Isha' Prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do so.

There is no difference in this regard between offering Tahajjud in a Masjid (Mosque) or at home. May Allah grant us all success!

Ruling on loud invoking of Allah's Blessings upon the Prophet between each two Rak'ahs of Tarawih

(Part No. 11; Page No. 369)

Q: What is the ruling on invoking Allah loudly to send peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to be pleased with the Rightly-Guided Caliphs in the intervals between the Rak'ahs of Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan)?

A: There is no basis for this act in the Purified Shar' (Law), as far as we know. Rather, it is one of the newly-invented Bid'ahs (innovations in religion). Therefore, it should be abandoned. The last generations of this Ummah (nation based on one creed) will not be successful, unless they follow the example of the early generations; that is, close adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah and the way trodden by the Salaf (righteous predecessors), and to be wary of whatever may be against that.

Sunnah of Fajr Prayer should not be repeated if the Adhan was pronounced after dawn

Q: I entered the Masjid (Mosque) at the time of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer and offered two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) with the intention of offering them as the Sunnah Qabliyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed before an obligatory Prayer) of the Fajr, but in the second Rak'ah, the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) pronounced the Adhan (call to Prayer), although on my way to the Masjid, I had heard the Adhan in some other Masjids.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 370)

However, when I finished the Sunnah (supererogatory Prayer), I sat to recite the Ever-Glorious Qur'an, but someone beside me told me that I should offer the Sunnah again for the Adhan was pronounced while I was offering it. Kindly, guide me as to what I should do.

A: If the Mu'adhin delayed the Adhan and pronounced it while you were offering the Sunnah which you started to offer after dawn, then you have prayed the Sunnah and there is no need to repeat it. However, if you doubt that the Mu'adhin pronounced the Adhan after dawn, then it is better to repeat the two Rak'ahs of Sunnah to be on the safe side and to be quite sure that you offered them after dawn.

Once Iqamah is pronounced no Salah should be offered except the obligatory one

Q: Some people enter the Masjid (Mosque) while the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) is being pronounced and because they know that the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) prolongs recitation in the first Rak'ah (unit of Prayer), they offer the Sunnah Qabliyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed before an obligatory Prayer) of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer before joining the Imam. What is the ruling on this?

A: This is not permissible, for the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) indicates that if a Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) enters the Masjid and finds that the Imam has started Salah,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 371)

they should join him and not offer the Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) of Fajr Prayer or any other. Rather, they should line up in the row and pray with the Imam. It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When the Iqamah is pronounced, no Salah (Prayer) should be offered except the obligatory one.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) Anyone who enters the Masjid while the Iqamah is being pronounced should pray with the Imam and postpone the Sunnah until after the obligatory Salah or after sunrise. As for praying it while the Imam prays, this is not permissible according to the Hadith mentioned above.

Q: I notice that some worshippers, particularly from among our Pakistani brothers, when they enter the Masjid (mosque) to perform Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, do not directly join the Imam who has already commenced the Salah (Prayer). They first offer the two supererogatory Rak‘ahs (units of Prayer) preceding the Fajr before joining the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer). What is the ruling on this? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: Such an act is not permissible. It is obligatory for the person who enters the Masjid and finds the Imam in Salah to join him. It is not permissible for such a person to busy themselves either with offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) or with offering Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) is pronounced, no Salah (Prayer) should be offered except the obligatory one.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book] on the authority of Abu Hurayrah)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 372)

There is no difference between the Sunnah Ratibah of Fajr Prayer and that of any other Salah.

It is permissible for a person who misses the two supererogatory Rak'ahs preceding Fajr Prayer to offer them after performing the obligatory Salah or even after the sun rises high in the sky, as authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). May Allah grant us success!

Q: We notice that when some people enter the Masjid to perform Fajr Prayer and find that the Salah has already started, they offer the two supererogatory Rak‘ahs preceding the Fajr and then join the Imam. What is the ruling on this? Is it better that one should offer such two supererogatory Rak‘ahs after Fajr directly or should one wait until after sunrise?

A: It is not permissible for a person who enters the Masjid and finds that the Salah has already been commenced to offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) or Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) is pronounced, no Salah (Prayer) should be offered except the obligatory one.﴿ (Related by Imam Muslim in his Sahih)

This Hadith includes Fajr Prayer and any other Salahs. Then, a person has the choice either to offer the Sunnah Ratibah after performing the obligatory Fajr Prayer or to postpone it until after the sun rises high in the sky and that is better, because it is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) what indicates this. May Allah grant us success!

Time of Sunnah of Fajr Prayer

(Part No. 11; Page No. 373)

Q: I always go to the Masjid (Mosque) for Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, but I find that the Salah (Prayer) has commenced and I have not yet offered the two supererogatory Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) of Fajr Prayer. Is it permissible for me to perform them after offering Fajr Prayer or should I offer them after sunrise? Does this reduce my reward, especially that these two supererogatory Rak'ahs of Fajr Prayer are better than this world and whatever it contains, as reported in the Hadith?

A: If it is not possible for a Muslim to offer the two supererogatory Rak'ahs of Fajr Prayer before it, they have the choice either to offer them after Fajr Prayer or to postpone them until after the sun rises high in the sky. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did both. However, it is better to postpone offering them until after the sun rises high in the sky in compliance with the command of the Prophet (peace be upon him). On the other hand, the Prophet (peace be upon him) approved offering them after Fajr Prayer.

Q: When should I make up for the two supererogatory Rak'ahs of Fajr Prayer if I miss them?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 374)

A: A Muslim who misses to offer the two supererogatory Rak'ahs of Fajr Prayer has the choice either to perform them after offering Fajr Prayer or after the sun rises high in the sky and that is better. It is authentically reported that: ﴾the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a person praying after Fajr (Dawn) Prayer was over. The Prophet (peace be upon him) disapproved of his action and asked him about it. The man replied, 'It is the Sunnah (the two supererogatory Rak'ahs) of Fajr Prayer.' So, the Prophet (peace be upon him) kept silent.﴿

It is also authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered that it should be made up for after the sun rises high. All praise is due to Allah, both options are permissible.

Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid is Sunnah not to be made up for

Q: What is the ruling if a person offers two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) after Fajr (Dawn) Prayer? Moreover, if one misses Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) before offering the obligatory Salah (Prayer), when should it be made up for?

A: Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid is Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) that is not to be made for. If a Muslim enters a Masjid while people are offering the Faridah (obligatory Prayer), Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid will be waived and it will be sufficient for a Muslim to perform the Faridah. Moreover, if a Muslim does not offer the Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed before or after an obligatory Prayer on a regular basis)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 375)

of Fajr Prayer in their house and comes when the Imam has started Salah, they may offer this supererogatory Salah after performing Fajr or after the sun rises high, according to the Hadiths authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard, but if they come when the obligatory Salah has not started yet, they can offer the Sunnah Ratibah and it will suffice for Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid as well.

Sunnah Ratibah suffices for Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid

Q: When a person enters the Masjid (mosque) to offer Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, after Adhan (call to prayer), should they offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) and then Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) or is only one of them sufficient?

A: It is prescribed in this case to offer Sunnah Ratibah and it will suffice for Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid. Similarly, if a person enters the Masjid and finds the obligatory Salah (Prayer) being offered, they should join the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) as the obligatory Salah suffices for Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾When the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) is pronounced, no Salah (Prayer) should be offered except the obligatory one.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book])

The objective here is that a Muslim should not sit in the Masjid before offering what they are able to of prayers. So, if there is a Salah that can replace Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid, it is sufficient, such as the Faridah (obligatory Prayer), Sunnah Ratibah, Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse), etc.

Joining the Imam is the Sunnah for whoever enters the Masjid while the Imam is offering Salah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 376)

Q: When some people enter the Masjid (mosque) and find the Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) offering the Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan), they offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) alone and then join the congregation. Is this act correspondent to the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet)? Guide us, may Allah reward you well!

A: The act of Sunnah for whoever enters the Masjid and finds the Imam offering Faridah (obligatory Prayer), Tarawih, Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse) etc., is to join the Imam at once and not offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid, for the Salah (Prayer) being performed is sufficient. I do not know of any disagreement among scholars in this regard. May Allah grant us success!

Sunnah should be offered before Faridah when waking up after sunrise

(Part No. 11; Page No. 377)

Q: What is the ruling on offering the Sunnah Qabliyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed before an obligatory Prayer) of the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer if a person wakes up after sunrise? Which is Mustahab (desirable): to offer the Sunnah first or to offer the Fajr Prayer at once and then the Sunnah?

A: The Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet) is to offer the Sunnah Qabliyyah of the Fajr Prayer at home first and then go to the Masjid (mosque); and if the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) has not been pronounced yet then a Muslim should offer Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque). If a Muslim has not offered the Sunnah at home and went to the Masjid, they should offer the Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) at the Masjid instead of Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid. If a Muslim performs it with the intention of offering both the Sunnah Qabliyyah and Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid, this is permissible. However, if a Muslim misses this Sunnah Prayer, because of, for example, waking after sunrise, they should offer the Sunnah Qabliyyah of the Fajr first, then offer the Faridah (i.e. Fajr Prayer) as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did when he and his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) overslept during a travel and missed the Fajr Prayer at its due time.

Hadith: Praying Fajr in congregation

(Part No. 11; Page No. 378)

Q: It was reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴿ Anyone who offers Fajr (Dawn) Prayer in congregation and sits engaged in Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) until sunrise and then offers two Rak'ahs it is equivalent to complete Hajj and 'Umrah (lesser pilgrimage).﴾ **Is this a Sahih (authentic) Hadith?**

A: There is scholarly disagreement with regard to its authenticity, but the most correct opinion of scholars is that it is Hadith Hasan (a Hadith whose chain of narration contains a narrator with weak exactitude, but is free from eccentricity or blemish), because it is reported through numerous chains of transmission.

Changing the place when offering Sunnah after obligatory Salah

Q: Is there any reported Hadith to support that it is Mustahab (desirable) to change the place when performing the Sunnah Ba'diyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed after an obligatory Prayer)?

A: I do not know of any Hadith Sahih (authentic Hadith) reported in this regard. However, Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) and many of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) used to do so. This is a matter open to choice, praise be to Allah! There is a Da'if (weak) Hadith reported by Abu Dawud (may Allah be merciful to him) concerning it that is supported by

the actual action of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) and the Salaf. May Allah grant us success!

Changing the place to perform Sunnah

Q: What is the wisdom underlying the change of place by a worshipper to offer Sunnah (supererogatory) Prayers after the Faridah (obligatory Prayer)?

A: There is no Sahih (authentic) Hadith reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding the changing of places - as far as we know. All the Hadiths reported in this concern are Da'if (weak).

Some scholars state that the wisdom behind this act - if assumed to be Shar'y (Islamically lawful) - is that the places where a person offers Salah (Prayer) will bear witness in their favor. Allah knows best, for He is All-Wise, All-Knowing!

Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib

(Part No. 11; Page No. 380)

All praise is due to Allah, and may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his Companions, and those who follow his guidance!

This is an important piece of advice regarding Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib (supererogatory Prayers that were stressed and regularly performed by the Prophet) and other supererogatory Salahs (Prayers). I advise my Muslim brothers to observe them and all that Allah has ordained, and to fulfill the Faridahs (obligatory acts of worship) and abstain from forbidden things.

The Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) indicates the legality of offering Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib after obligatory Salahs. They contain many benefits for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Anyone who prays twelve (supererogatory) Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) in a day and a night will have by them a house built in Jannah (Paradise).﴿ Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib consist of twelve Rak'ahs (units of Prayer). Some scholars are of the opinion that they consist of ten Rak'ahs, yet the Hadiths authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) indicate that they are twelve and that the Sunnah Qabliyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed before an obligatory Prayer) to be performed before Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer is four Rak'ahs. 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) never abandoned four (Rak'ahs) before Zhuhr Prayer.﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 281)

Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both), on the other hand, is proven to have stated that they are ten Rak'ahs and that the Sunnah Qabliyyah of Zhuhr Prayer is two Rak'ahs. But both 'Aishah and Um Habibah (may Allah be pleased with them both) memorized a Hadith proving that it consists of four Rak'ahs and the rule is that the one who memorizes something is a proof against the one who is unaware of it. Accordingly, it is established that the Rak'ahs of Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib are twelve: Four Rak'ahs before Zhuhr Prayer and two after it; two after Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer; two after 'Isha' (Night) Prayer; and two before Fajr (Dawn) Prayer.

These established Sunnah (supererogatory) Salahs hold great benefit and observing them regularly is one of the reasons for entering Jannah and being saved from Hellfire, provided one performs the Faridahs and abstains from forbidden things. They are supererogatory and not obligatory; however, as is stated in the Hadith, they complete any lack in the obligatory Salahs and are means of attaining the Love of Allah. Observing them means copying the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Hence, a believer should be as keen to observe them as the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was, along with observing Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer before noon), Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer), and Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units). Therefore, a Muslim should strive to perform all these supererogatory Salahs. Should one miss the Sunnah Prayer to be performed with Zhuhr Prayer, the correct opinion is that it is not to be made up for after its time is overdue, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴾when he missed Sunnah Ba'diyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed after an obligatory Prayer) of Zhuhr then made up for it after 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, he was asked by Um Salamah whether

(Part No. 11; Page No. 382)

it should make up for it if is missed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied in the negative.﴿

Therefore, it is one of the practices exclusive to the Prophet (peace be upon him) i.e., making up for it after 'Asr Prayer. As for Sunnah (supererogatory) Prayer to be performed with Fajr Prayer, it can be made up for after Fajr Prayer or even after sunrise if one misses to offer it before Fajr Prayer. This is based on the reported Hadiths which indicate that the Prophet (peace be upon him) made up for it after the sun had risen high in the sky.

As for the opinion of some scholars that abandoning Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib is Fisq (flagrant violation of Islamic law), this is not a sound opinion; rather, it is incorrect because they are Nafilahs (supererogatory acts of worship). Therefore, any Muslim who regularly performs the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers and avoids committing sins is not to be labeled a Fasiq (someone flagrantly violating Islamic law). On the contrary, such a person is a good, upright believer.

The same applies to the opinion of some Fuqaha' (Muslim jurists) who said that it is one of the prerequisite conditions of uprightness for giving testimony. This is a weak opinion which bears no weight against the preponderant view. Any believer observing the obligations and abandoning things forbidden is to be looked upon as upright and trustworthy. Yet, it is characteristic of the believer who has complete Iman (faith) to compete in offering Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib as well as hastening to all that is good.

Thus, the believer will become of those who are close to Allah. Believers are of three kinds in acts of worship: Those who wrong themselves; those following a middle course; and those who are foremost in good deeds. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says in Surah Fatir: ﴾Then We gave the Book (the Qur'ân) as inheritance to such of Our slaves whom We chose (the followers of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم). Then of them are some who wrong their ownselves﴿ meaning those committing sins;

(Part No. 11; Page No. 383)

﴾and of them are some who follow a middle course﴿ meaning the pious who observe the obligations and abstain from prohibitions; ﴾and of them are some who are, by Allâh's Leave, foremost in good deeds.﴿ meaning those who exert themselves in performing Nafilahs (supererogatory acts of worship) along with Faridahs. Those are of the highest rank; those who follow a moderate course are in a middle rank, whereas those who wrong themselves are of the lowest rank. Those who commit sins are left to the Will of Allah. If one dies wronging oneself by committing sins, then they are left to the Will of Allah. He may either forgive or punish them, as He wills. However, such sinners will not abide in Hellfire forever; rather, they will be punished according to the sins committed and then they will be brought out, because only the Kafirs (disbelievers) will abide there forever, we implore Allah to grant us safety! The point is that Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib and other supererogatory acts of worship are signs of perfect Iman and are characteristic of those who are ahead in good deeds. It is for this reason that: ﴾when asked about Islam, the Prophet (peace be upon him) defined it to be the Two Shahadahs (Testimonies of Faith), Salah (Prayer), Zakah (obligatory charity), Sawm (Fasting) and Hajj. The questioner further asked, 'Am I obliged to perform any other (duties) besides these?' He (peace be upon him) said, 'No, except that which you offer voluntarily.'﴿

This proves that Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib and other Nafilahs are all optional and not obligatory. This is why ﴾the Prophet (peace be upon him) commented on the words of the questioner who said when leaving, 'I will not do more or less than that,' saying, 'He will be successful if

(Part No. 11; Page No. 384)

he proves truthful.'﴿ It becomes clear from this that supererogatory acts of worship are not a condition for being righteous or for being a believer. Rather, they are of the things that make one's faith perfect and result in great good and the doubling of reward. They are means for entering Jannah with the close Servants of Allah. We ask Allah to grant us and all Muslims success, guidance and a good end!

Making up for Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib

Q: Is it permissible to make up for Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib (supererogatory Prayers that were stressed and regularly performed by the Prophet) that were missed, or not? Please advise, may Allah reward you with the best!

A: The obligation is waived whenever their time is overdue except for the Sunnah of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, for it should be made up for after sunrise, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) made up for it with Fajr Prayer when they were overtaken by sleep during one of his travels. Over and above, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered whoever misses it to make up for it after sunrise. This is supported by the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a person who was making up for it after Fajr Prayer and did not forbid him to do so. The same applies to Sunnah Qabliyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed before an obligatory Prayer) of Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer, which can be made up for after

(Part No. 11; Page No. 385)

Sunnah Ba'diyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed after an obligatory Prayer), since the Prophet (peace be upon him) made up for it when he missed it after the Salah (Prayer). Allah is the One Who grants success!

Time and Rak'ahs of Sunnah Ratibah offered with Zhuhr

Q: Should the Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) of Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer be offered before or after Zhuhr Prayer? Are they two or four Rak'ahs (units of Prayer)? Please advise.

A: It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ﴿used to observe ten Rak'ahs daily: two before and after Zhuhr Prayer, two after Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, two after 'Isha' (Night) Prayer, and two before Fajr Prayer.﴾ (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in the Two Sahih [authentic] Books of Hadith on the authority of Ibn 'Umar) It is also reported from 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: ﴿The Prophet (peace be upon him) never abandoned four Rak'ahs before Zhuhr Prayer.﴾ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih) It is better for the believing person to offer four Rak'ahs before and two Rak'ahs after Zhuhr, according to the cited Hadith of 'Aishah. It would be even better to offer four Rak'ahs before and four Rak'ahs after Zhuhr, according to the Hadith reported by Imam Ahmad and the Four Compilers of Hadith (Imams Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y, and Ibn Majah) through a good Isnad (chain of narrators)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 386)

on the authority of Um Habibah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ﴿ Anyone who maintains performing four Rak'ahs before and after Zhuhr Prayer, Allah will make them forbidden for Hellfire.﴾ This is indeed a great virtue.

These are called Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib (supererogatory Prayers that were stressed and regularly performed by the Prophet) referred to in the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴿Anyone who prays twelve Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) in a day and a night will have by them a house built in Jannah (Paradise).﴾ (Related by Muslim on the authority of Um Habibah and by Al-Tirmidhy through good Isnad) Also, his narration contains the addition: ﴿Four Rak'ahs before Zhuhr Prayer and two after it; two Rak'ahs after Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer; two Rak'ahs after 'Isha' (Night) Prayer and two Rak'ahs before Fajr (Dawn) Prayer.﴾

Sunnah before 'Asr Prayer

Q: I offer four supererogatory Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) before 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer, should I say Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after each two Rak'ahs or offer them consecutively and say Taslim at the end of the four ?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 387)

Please advise.

A: It is recommended for every Muslim, male or female, to offer four Rak'ahs before 'Asr Prayer, ending each two of them with Taslim, acting upon the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾May Allah confer mercy on a person who prays four Rak'ahs before 'Asr.﴿ This is also based on the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴾(Optional) Night Prayer is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on).﴿ Allah is the One Who grants success!

Permissibility of offering two Rak'ahs between every two Adhans

Q: I entered the Masjid (mosque) fifteen minutes before the Adhan (call to Prayer) of 'Asr (Afternoon), then I offered Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) and sat to recite Qur'an. However, after the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) had pronounced the Adhan,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 388)

all the attendees in the Masjid stood and offered two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) other than those of Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid. Next to me, there sat a student who did not stand to offer this Salah (Prayer) and I did the same too. Please, clarify the ruling on this incident. Would it make any difference if this Salah was 'Asr or any other?

A: It is recommended for every Muslim to offer two Rak'ahs between the two Adhans, whether they are a Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) or otherwise, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ('Between every two Adhans (i.e., Adhan and Iqamah [call to start the Prayer]), there is a Salah. Between every two Adhans, there is a Salah,' and in the third time he (peace be upon him) said, 'To whoever wishes to do so.') (Agreed upon its authenticity by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) This is applicable to all obligatory Salahs. The two Adhans means the Adhan (call to Prayer) and Iqamah (call to start the Prayer).

Thus, this Hadith and others indicating the same meaning represent proof on the legality of offering two Rak'ahs between the two Adhans. But it should be noted that the performance of Sunnah Ratibah such as that of Fajr and Zhuhr is sufficient. Only the Adhan on Friday is excluded from this ruling, as it is not permissible for a Khatib (preacher) or for those who attend the Jumu'ah (Friday) Prayer to offer Salah between these two Adhans, for this was neither observed by the Messenger (peace be upon him) nor any of his Sahabah (Companions, may Allah be pleased with them). However, the wisdom behind this - and Allah knows best - is that people are ordered to be ready and attentive for the Khutbah (sermon).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 389)

But on the other hand, any latecomer who enters the Masjid while the Imam is delivering the Khutbah should not sit until they offer two Rak'ahs as Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded to do so and to comply with the general meaning of the Hadith: (When anyone of you enters the Masjid, they should not sit down until they pray two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer).) (Agreed upon its authenticity by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) Allah is the One Who grants success!

Supererogatory Salah is of two followed by two

Q: I said Takbir ("Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") in order to offer Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed before an obligatory prayer on a regular basis) of Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer and intended to offer four Rak'ahs (units of prayer) ending them with one Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). Then, after I performed one Rak'ah, Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) was announced, in this case should I change my intention and offer two Rak'ahs or interrupt the Salah (Prayer)? Please advise, may Allah reward you well!

A: It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (When Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) is announced, there should be no Salah except the obligatory one.) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) Accordingly, it is prescribed for you, if the Iqamah is announced while you are offering a Nafilah (supererogatory Prayer), to stop it in accordance with this noble Hadith.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 390)

Moreover, a Muslim should perform the supererogatory Salah in the form of two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on), whether during the day or night, according to the Hadith of Prophet (peace be upon him): ((Optional) Night Salah is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on).) (Agreed upon its authenticity by Imams Al-Bukhari and Muslim) According to another Sahih (authentic) narration: ((Optional) night and day Salah is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs.) (Related by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan [Imams Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy, Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah] with an authentic Isnad [chain of narrators]) If, however, Iqamah is announced while the praying person is in the last Ruku' (bowing) or Sujud (prostration) in the supererogatory Salah, it is better to complete it, as there remains less than one Rak'ah (unit of prayer) to finish it, while the term Salah mentioned in the Hadith does not apply to less than one Rak'ah, as the least to constitute a Salah is one Rak'ah. Allah is the One Who grants success!

Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib during travel

Q: Is it permissible to offer Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib (supererogatory Prayers that were stressed and regularly performed by the Prophet) during travel? Please, advise and support the answer with evidence. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is recommended not to offer Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib during travel, except for Fajr (Dawn) Prayer and Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units). It is authentically reported from Ibn 'Umar and others that ﴾the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to leave Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib during travel except for Witr and the Sunnah (supererogatory Salah) of Fajr Prayer.﴿ Yet, it is permissible, whether residing or traveling, to offer the unrestricted types of supererogatory Salahs (Prayers) and those occasionally offered for a specific reason like the supererogatory Salah after Wudu' (ablution), Salat-ul-Tawaf (two-unit-Prayer performed after circumambulating the Ka'bah), Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer before noon),

(Part No. 11; Page No. 391)

and Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer) according to the Hadiths related in this regard. May Allah grant us success!

Q: People differ about the performance of Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib (supererogatory Prayers that were stressed and regularly performed by the Prophet) while shortening Salah (Prayer) during travel. Some say that this act is Mustahab (desirable), whereas others say that it is not. What is your opinion on this matter as well as the virtue of offering the unrestricted types of supererogatory Salahs such as Tahajjud (optional late night Prayer) during traveling?

A: The Sunnah (action following the example of the Prophet) for a traveler is to leave Al-Sunan Al-Rawatib of Zhuhr (Noon), Maghrib (Sunset) and 'Isha' (Night) Prayers. One exception is made for the supererogatory Salah offered before Fajr, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who did so. Similarly, it is recommended to offer Tahhajud and Witr during travel, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do so.

The same applies to all unrestricted types of supererogatory Salahs and those occasionally offered for a specific reason such as Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer after sunrise), the supererogatory Salah after each Wudu' (ablution), and Salat-ul-Kusuf (Prayer on a solar eclipse).

The same is true with Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation) and Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) on entering the Masjid (mosque) for the purpose of Salah or any other purpose.

Stopping supererogatory Salah when Iqamah is announced

(Part No. 11; Page No. 392)

Q: When a man started offering the supererogatory Salah (Prayer) of Zhuhr (Noon), the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) was announced. Should he stop Salah or complete it? Please advise.

A: If **Iqamah is announced while a group of worshippers are offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) or Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis),** they should stop it to offer the obligatory Salah, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (When Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) is announced, there should be no Salah except the obligatory one.) (Related by Muslim)

Some scholars are of the opinion that the praying person should complete the Salah quickly for Allah (Exalted be He) says:(O you who believe! Obey Allâh, and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) and render not vain your deeds.) They interpreted the previous Hadith to refer to whoever starts offering supererogatory Salah after Iqamah.

The first opinion is the correct one, because the previously mentioned Hadith includes both cases. There are other Hadiths that indicate general applicability and that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said this when he saw a man offering Salah while the Mu'adhin was calling to Salah.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 393)

The Noble Ayah (Qur'anic verse) is general while the Hadith is specific. Therefore, specific evidence is to be given precedence over general evidence, without contradicting it, according to Usul-ul-Fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence). However, if the obligatory Salah is established while the praying person is offering the second Rak'ah (unit of Prayer), it is permissible to complete it as less than one Rak'ah is left to end Salah. May Allah grant us success!

Explanation of the Hadith: ﴾Once the Iqamah has been made, there should be no Salah except the prescribed one.﴿

Q: Kindly provide us with a simplified explanation of the Hadith which reads: ﴾Once the Iqamah (call to start the Prayer) has been made, there should be no Salah (Prayer) except the prescribed (obligatory) one.﴿

A: This Hadith is related by Muslim in his Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith); it is to be applied according to its apparent meaning. It means that when the Mu'adhin (caller to Prayer) starts to announce Iqamah (call to start the Prayer), then whoever is offering a supererogatory Salah should discontinue praying, whether it is Sunnah Ratibah (supererogatory Prayer performed on a regular basis) or Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque), and prepare for offering the obligatory Salah.

Since the obligatory Salah is more important than the supererogatory one, the person should discontinue the latter if they are in the process of offering it once the Iqamah for the obligatory Salah is announced.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 394)

This is the intended meaning of this Sahih (authentic) Hadith, according to the more correct of the two opinions held by scholars.

However, some scholars are of the view that one may complete the supererogatory Salah as quickly as possible and should not discontinue it. In support of their view, they quote the following Ayah (Qur'anic verse) which reads: ﴾O you who believe! Obey Allâh, and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) and render not vain your deeds.﴿ In reply to this, proponents of the first view, which is the more correct one as mentioned above, state that the meaning of the Ayah is categorical while the ruling contained in the Hadith is specific. The established rule for the majority of scholars which is supported by many examples is that priority has to be given to the specific which does not contradict the categorical.

Another interpretation of the above Ayah which reads: ﴾and render not vain your deeds.﴿ is that Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) orders Muslims not to render their deeds fruitless by Riddah (apostasy) and in our case this does not apply.

Therefore, the meaning of the Ayah is general while the evidence supporting the view that one should discontinue their Salah upon hearing the Iqamah is specific. The specific ruling limits the general but does not contradict or revoke it. This is what we believe is right and therefore, the Fatwa we issue in this regard is that if the Iqamah is announced while one is offering a supererogatory Salah, they should discontinue their Salah unless they are in the second Ruku` or Sujud (prostration) or last Tashahhud (testification recited in the sitting position in last unit of Prayer). Only in this case may one continue their supererogatory Salah, because the minimum is to offer one Rak`ah, and what is left is less than a Rak`ah. Continuing Salah is preferred in this case and does not contradict the above Sahih Hadith.

Due time of Salat-ul-Duha

(Part No. 11; Page No. 395)

Q: I sometimes offer Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer before noon) immediately after sunrise or a short time before the Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer? Is this the right time when one should offer it?

A: The time of Salat-ul-Duha begins when the sun rises to a spear's length above the horizon and until it passes its zenith.

The preferred time; however, begins at mid-morning when the heat of the sun is intense. It is also known as Salat-ul-Awwabin (Prayer of the oft-repentant). The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾The Salat-ul-Awwabin (Prayer of the oft-repentant) is observed when your weaned camels feel the scorching heat of the sun.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith).

There is no harm in offering it immediately after sunrise when the sun has risen to a spear's length above the horizon. One may also delay it until some time later or shortly before the Zhuhr Prayer is due. The matter is flexible.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 396)

What is more important is to observe it regularly. If someone fears that becoming busy with some work may prevent them from offering it, they should hasten to offer it after sunrise so as to attain the reward which Allah gifts to those who offer it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised Abu Hurayrah and Abu Al-Darda' to offer Salat-ul-Duha regularly. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴾Each morning, charity is due from every bone in the body of every one of you; every utterance of Allah's glorification, i.e. subhana Allah (Glorified be Allah), is an act of charity, every utterance of praise, i.e. alhamdu lillah (All praise be to Allah), is an act of charity, every utterance of profession of His Oneness, i.e. La ilaha illa Allah (there is no deity but Allah), is an act of charity, every utterance of profession of His Greatness, i.e. allahu akbar (Allah is the Greatest), is an act of charity, enjoining right is an act of charity, and forbidding wrong is an act of charity. It is enough to pray two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) instead of all these required charities.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith on the authority of Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him)).

The above Hadith indicates the lofty status which Salat-ul-Duha holds. Although offering two Rak`ahs is the minimum number of Salat-ul-Duha, there is no harm if one increases the number to four, six, eight or more with Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) separating each two Rak`ahs.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 397)

Q: I see some brothers offering Salat-ul-Ishraq (supererogatory Prayer shortly after sunrise) immediately after sunrise. Is this permissible? If not, what is the prescribed time of offering this Salah? I hope you will calculate this by watch time, so that it will be become clear to us. May Allah reward you best!

A: It is an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) to offer Salat-ul-Ishraq on a daily basis. The minimum number of Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) in this Salah is two. There are many Hadiths speaking of this Salah. Its time starts when the sun has risen to a spear's length above the horizon. This means one quarter of an hour after sunrise. The best time to perform it is when the weaned camels start to feel the scorching heat of the sun. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) states: ﴾The Salat-ul-Awwabin (Prayer of the oft-repentant) is observed when your weaned camels feel the scorching heat of the sun.﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith). May Allah grant us success!

Manner of performing Salat-ul-Duha

(Part No. 11; Page No. 398)

Q: Some people say that the minimum number of Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) of Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer before noon) is two and the maximum is twelve. Others say that it consists of eight Rak'ahs because the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) performed it in this way. I perform as many Rak'ahs as my time allows me to. Sometimes I offer two Rak'ahs and some other times I offer eight Rak`ahs. When I have enough time I offer twelve Rak'ahs. I recite Surah (Qur'anic chapter) Al-Fatihah and Surah Al-Shams in the first Rak'ah and Surah Al-Fatihah and Surah Al-Duha in the second Rak'ah. I sometimes abandon it due to illness or I may not observe it regularly. I was told that this is not permissible and I must offer it regularly.

My question is: How many Rak'ahs should I offer? Should I stick to eight Rak'ahs like the Prophet (peace be upon him) did? Which Surah am I recommended to recite in the first Rak'ah: Al-Shams or Al-Duha?

(Part No. 11; Page No. 399)

A: Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer before noon) is a stressed Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) which was regularly offered by the Prophet (peace be upon him). He (peace be upon him) instructed his Sahabah (Companions) to offer it. The minimum number of its Rak'ahs is two. If you regularly observe two Rak'ahs, you are considered to be applying the Sunnah of offering Salat-ul-Duha. If you offer four, six, eight or more Rak'ahs, as your time allows, no problem, as no exact number of Rak'ahs has not been specified for it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) offered it as two Rak'ahs on one occasion and four Rak'ahs on another. On the day of the Liberation of Makkah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have offered it as eight Rak'ahs. The matter is flexible.

Muslim narrated in his Sahih (Authentic Hadith Book) on the authority of 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) who said: ﴿The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to offer four Rak'ahs in Duha (Forenoon) Prayer and he sometimes offered more, as Allah willed.﴾ It is narrated in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: ﴿My close friend (the Prophet, peace be upon him) advised me to do three things: to observe Sawm on three days of each month; to pray two Rak'ahs of Duha; and to pray Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) before going to sleep.﴾

It is narrated in the Two Sahih on the authority of Um Hani' (may Allah be pleased with her) ﴿that she saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) offering Salat-ul-Duha as eight Rak'ahs on the Day of the Opening of Makkah.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 400)

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There is nothing wrong if a worshipper offers it as eight, ten, twelve Rak'ahs, or more or less than that. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴿(Optional) Salah by night and day is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on).﴾ It is an act of Sunnah to offer supererogatory Salah (Prayer) in the form of pairs of Rak'ahs and to make Talsim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after each two. The minimum number of the Rak'ahs of Salat-ul-Duha is two to be offered after the sun rises high in the sky until it is straight overhead at noon; all this interval is the forenoon period. It is better to offer Salat-ul-Duha at forenoon peak time when the sun is hot. This is based on the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him): ﴿The Salah (Prayer) of those who are oft-repentant is observed when the feet of young camels get scalded (by the heat of sand).﴾ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book])

However, if you perform it on some days and leave it on other days, there is no problem. But it is preferable to offer it on a daily basis. This is to act upon the advice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said: ﴿Deeds most loved by Allah are those done regularly, even if they are small.﴾ Therefore, it is better to keep on offering Salat-ul-Duha.

But there is no blame on a person who does not offer Salat-ul-Duha or offers it a few days only.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 401)

This is because it is a Nafilah (supererogatory Prayer) and is not Wajib (obligatory).

It is Sunnah to recite Surahs or some Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) along with Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an). No specific portion is stated. It is Wajib to recite Al-Fatihah; any more Qur'an recited after it is Sunnah. So, you may recite along with it Surah Al-Shams, Al-Layl, Al-Duha, Al-Sharh, Al-Tin, Al- `Alaq or any other Surahs or Ayahs. If you recite some Ayahs or one Ayah after Al-Fatihah, it will be good. All the foregoing is acceptable - praise be to Allah. May Allah grant us all success!

Salat-ul-Duha and Salat-ul-Ishraq are one and the same Salah

Q: What is the difference between Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer before noon) and Salat-ul-Ishraq (supererogatory Prayer shortly after sunrise)? What is their minimum and maximum number of Rak'ahs (units of Prayer)? At what time should each of these Salahs (Prayers) be performed?

A: Salat-ul-Ishraq refers to Salat-ul-Duha when offered at the beginning of its prescribed time. However, it is preferable to offer it when the sun has risen above the horizon; a time when the heat of the sun is intense. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: (The Salah (Prayer) of those who are oft-repentant is observed when the feet of young camels get scalded (by the heat of sand).) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Book of Hadith])

(Part No. 11; Page No. 402)

The meant time by the Hadith is when the sun becomes unbearably hot for young camels.

The minimum number of Rak'ahs offered in Salat-ul-Duha is two. It was authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: (My close friend (the Prophet, peace be upon him) advised me to do three things: to observe Sawm on three days of each month; to pray two Rak'ahs of Duha (Forenoon); and to pray Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units) before going to sleep.)

It was also authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) (prayed Salat-ul-Duha on the day of the Opening of Makkah as eight Rak'ahs.) The maximum number of its Rak'ahs has not been specified. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed 'Amr ibn 'Abasah (may Allah be pleased with him) saying: (Perform Subh (Dawn) Prayer, then abstain from praying when the sun is rising until it is fully up, for it rises between the two horns of Satan, and the Kafirs (disbelievers) prostrate themselves to it at that time. Then pray, for Salah is witnessed and attended (by angels) till the shadow becomes about the length of a lance.) (Related in a lengthy Hadith by Muslim in his Sahih)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered him to offer Salah after the sun has risen above the horizon until it is directly overhead (at its zenith). He (peace be upon him) did not specify to him the number of Rak'ahs. This indicates that Salat-ul-Duha has no maximum number of Rak'ahs. It is preferable to make Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after offering each two Rak'ahs. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ((Optional) Night Salah is two Rak'ahs followed by two Rak'ahs (and so on).) (Related by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Al-Tirmidhy,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 403)

Al-Nasa'y and Ibn Majah through an authentic Isnad [chain of narrators] on the authority of Ibn 'Umar)
Allah is the One Who grants success!

Reciting the Qur'an at home until sunrise

after offering Fajr Prayer

Q: Does a Muslim receive the same reward for remaining in the Masjid (mosque) reciting Qur'an until sunrise then praying Salat-ul-Ishraq (supererogatory Prayer shortly after sunrise) if they do so at home? Kindly enlighten us on this issue, may Allah prolong your life!

A: This is a very blessed act that brings a great reward. However, the apparent meaning of the Hadiths narrated in this regard is that one who recites the Qur'an at home after offering Fajr (Dawn) Prayer will not receive the same reward promised to the worshipper who keeps sitting in their Musalla (praying-place) at the Masjid.

However, if a man offers Fajr Prayer at home due to sickness or fear then keeps sitting in his Musalla engaged in Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) or reciting the Qur'an until the sun rises high, and then offers two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer), he will be entitled to receive the same reward of doing so at the Masjid, as he is excused for praying at home.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 404)

The same applies to a woman who, after offering Fajr Prayer, remains seated at her Musalla mentioning the Name of Allah or reciting Ayahs of the Qur'an until the sun rises high, then offers two Rak'ahs. She is entitled to the reward mentioned in the Hadiths for this act - that is, Allah will write down to the doer the reward of performing complete Hajj and 'Umrah (lesser pilgrimage). There are many Hadiths supporting one another in this regard. These Hadiths fall under the category of Hadith Hasan (good Hadith). Allah is the Grantor of success!

Reciting some Ayahs after Al-Fatihah in supererogatory Salah

Q: Does a worshipper offering supererogatory Salah (Prayer) have to recite some Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) after Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Qur'an)? I am used to reciting Surah Al-Kafirun and Surah Al-Ikhlas in the Sunnah of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer.

A: It is recommended for the person offering supererogatory Salah to recite some Ayahs of the Qur'an after Al-Fatihah. It is only obligatory to recite Al-Fatihah in every Rak'ah (unit of Prayer), which is considered an essential requirement for the validity of Salah, no matter whether it is Faridah (obligatory Prayer) or Nafilah (supererogatory Prayer). It suffices to recite Al-Fatihah only; however, it is preferable to recite another Surah or some Ayahs of the Qur'an in addition to Al-Fatihah. This is based on the action of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 405)

who used to recite Al-Fatihah along with some Ayahs of the Qur'an. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: ﴿There is no Salah (i.e., Salah is not valid) for the one who does not recite Fatiha-tul-Kitab (the Opening of the Book, i.e. Al-Fatihah).﴾

As for the Sunnah of Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, it is preferable to recite in the first Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) Surah Al-Kafirun which reads: ﴿Say: (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم to these Mushrikûn and Kâfirûn): "O Al-Kafirûn (disbelievers in Allâh, in His Oneness, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Resurrection, and in Al-Qadar)!﴾ and Surah Al-Ikhlas which reads: ﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴾ in the second Rak'ah.

The worshipper may also, as was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him), recite the following Ayah from Surah Al-Baqarah in the first Rak'ah: ﴿Say (O Muslims), "We believe in Allâh and that which has been sent down to us"﴾ and the following Ayah from Surah Al-'Imran in the second Rak'ah: ﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you﴾

It is all right if one chooses to recite other Ayahs than those mentioned above. However, it is Mustahab (desirable) to follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and recite the same Ayahs that he (peace be upon him) chose to recite. It is also Mustahab to recite Surah Al-Kafirun after Al-Fatihah in the first Rak'ah of Sunnah Ba'diyyah (supererogatory Prayer performed after an obligatory Prayer) of the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer and in the first Rak'ah of Salat-ul-Tawaf (two-unit-Prayer performed after circumambulating the Ka'bah). The first Ayah of the Surah reads:﴿ Say: (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم to these Mushrikûn and Kâfirûn): "O Al-Kafirûn (disbelievers in Allâh, in His Oneness, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Resurrection, and in Al-Qadar)!﴾ In the second Rak'ah one is recommended to recite Surah Al-Ikhlas which reads: ﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "He is Allâh, (the) One.﴾ This was the regular practice authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Way of offering Sujud-ul-Tilawah and the ritual purity required for it

(Part No. 11; Page No. 406)

Q: Is it necessary for performing Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation) to be ritually pure? Should one say Takbir ("Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") when starting prostration and when rising up from it during or outside Salah (Prayer)?

What should one say during this kind of prostration? Are the Du'a's (supplications) related in this concern Sahih (authentic)? Should one say Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after this prostration, if one performs it outside Salah?

A: Taharah (ritual purification) is not a prerequisite for offering Sujud-ul-Tilawah, according to the sounder of the two opinions of scholars. Similarly, there is no prescribed Taslim or Takbir on rising up from it, according to the sounder of the two opinions of scholars.

But it is prescribed to say, "Allahu Akbar" upon prostrating, based on the Hadith authentically reported on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) which indicates this.

If Sujud-ul-Tilawah is offered during Salah, Takbir must be said when going down and rising up from it, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say Takbir in every movement of going down or up during Salah. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (

(Part No. 11; Page No. 407)

Pray as you have seen me praying.) (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) The same Dhikr (utterance of remembering Allah) and Du'a' (supplication) said during prostration in Salah are prescribed in Sujud-ul-Tilawah, based on the general meaning of the Hadiths. Among these invocations is: (Allahumma laka sajadtu wa bika amantu wa laka aslamtu, sajada wajhi lilladhi khalaqahu wa sawarahu wa shaqa sam'ahu wa basarahu, tabaraka Allaah ahsan ul-khaaliqin [O Allah, it is to You that I prostrate myself, in You that I believe, and to You I submit. My face has prostrated to the One who created and shaped it, and gave it hearing and sight. Blessed be Allah, the best of creators].) Related by Muslim in his Sahih from the Hadith of 'Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say this invocation in prostration during Salah.

As we clarified previously, it is prescribed to say in Sujud-ul-Tilawah the invocations said in prostration during Salah. Moreover, it is related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated to Allah in Sujud-ul-Tilawah, saying: (Allahumma aktub li biha 'indaka ajran wa'mhu 'anni biha wizran waj'alha li 'indaka dukhran wa taqabalha minni kama taqabaltaha min 'abdika Dawud [O Allah, record to me a reward for this (prostration), and remove from me a sin by it. Save it for me and accept it from me just as You accepted it from Your slave Dawud].)

It is obligatory to say: "Subhana Rabbiya Al-A'la" (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High) in Sujud-ul-Tilawah as in the prostration of Salah. Any additional Dhikr or Du'a' is Mustahab (desirable).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 408)

Sujud-ul-Tilawah, whether during or outside Salah, is Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) not Wajib (obligatory), because evidence to that effect was authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hadith on the authority of Zayd ibn Thabit. Another authentic Hadith narrated from 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) also supports that. Allah is the One Who grants success!

Ruling on performing Sujud-ul-Tilawah without being ritually pure or facing the Qiblah

Q: Is it permissible for a person who recites the Qur'an without facing the Qiblah (Ka'bah-direction faced for Prayer) to make Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation) when reciting one of Ayat-ul-Sujud (Qur'anic verses of Prostration). Is Taharah (ritual purification) a prerequisite for making Sujud-ul-Tilawah? Should I make Sujud-ul-Tilawah if I recite one of Ayat-ul-Sujud while sitting in the plane or car? Will the ruling be the same if I do so while sitting on the chair in my house or office? Please advise. May Allah reward you with the best!

(Part No. 11; Page No. 409)

A: It is Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) to make Sujud (prostration) on reciting one of Ayat-ul-Sujud, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah (Companions, may Allah be pleased with them): ﴾The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite the Qur'an (while sitting among the Sahabah) and when he recited a Surah containing one of Ayat-ul-Sujud, he would prostrate and they would prostrate along with him.﴿

It is also Sunnah to face the Qiblah, if it is possible. Sujud-ul-Tilawah is not like Salah, so it is not essential to meet the conditions and requirements needed for Salah, for lack of evidence on this issue. Rather, it is an act showing submission to Allah and imitation of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Ibn Umar narrated: ﴾The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to recite the Qur'an to us. When he reached one of Ayat-ul-Sujud, he would utter Takbir (saying: 'Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]') and prostrate himself and we would prostrate ourselves along with him.﴿ He (peace be upon him) did not say that those who are not ritually pure should not make Sujud.

Evidently, such gatherings inevitably comprise some who are not ritually pure. Had Taharah (ritual purification) been a prerequisite for making Sujud-ul-Tilawah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have informed the Sahabah, who would in turn convey the ruling to the followers in the same manner they conveyed the Sirah (biography) and Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Accordingly, it is permissible for the traveler reciting Qur'an on board of a plane, car, boat or on a mount to make Sujud facing the direction the means of transportation takes. This was the manner that the Prophet (peace be upon him) adopted when offering supererogatory Salahs during travel. If it is possible for the rider offering supererogatory Salah to face the Qiblah at Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer) and then resume the direction of their destination,

(Part No. 11; Page No. 410)

it would be better, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) is authentically reported to have done so according to some Hadiths. May Allah grant us success!

Ruling on Takbir when prostrating for Sujud-ul-Tilawah

Q: Is it obligatory to say Takbir ("Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") when prostrating for Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation), whether during Salah (Prayer) or outside it? Is it obligatory when making Sujud-ul-Tilawah outside Salah to offer Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) after it? Kindly enlighten us, may Allah grant you success!

A: Sujud-ul-Tilawah is performed in the same manner as ordinary Sujud (prostration) during Salah. Therefore, a person who is offering Salah should say, "Allahu Akbar" when prostrating for Sujud-ul-Tilawah and after rising up from the prostrating position. This is supported by the following authentic Hadith: ﴾In Salah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pronounce Takbir at every lowering and rising; whenever he prostrated he would pronounce Takbir, and whenever he rose he would pronounce Takbir.﴿ This is the action reported to be done by the Prophet (peace be upon him) on authority of his Sahabah (Companions) and the Hadiths of Abu Hurayrah and others. If a person is performing Sujud-ul-Tilawah outside Salah, scholars hold the opinion that they should only say, "Allahu Akbar" upon prostrating for Sujud-ul-Tilawah. This is the known opinion based on the report related by Abu Dawud and Al-Hakim. But they do not see that one should say Takbir or make Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) upon rising from Sujud-ul-Tilawah. Some scholars are of the opinion that both Takbir and Taslim are to be performed upon rising from the prostrating position.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 411)

Since there exists no Hadith to support this latter view, the reciter is only required to say, "Allahu Akbar" once at the beginning of prostrating for Sujud-ul-Tilawah, if they are not offering Salah. It is prescribed to recite in Sujud-ul-Tilawah the same Du`a' (supplication) and Tasbih (glorification of Allah) which are said in ordinary Sujud during Salah. Neither Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/last unit of Prayer), Takbir nor Talsim should be performed upon rising from Sujud-ul-Tilawah, according to the more correct of the two opinions held by scholars, because no Hadith has been reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to that effect.

Qur'an teacher prostrating for Sujud-ul-Tilawah

Q: Am I required to prostrate for Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of recitation) when I recite Qur'an at work while I am sitting at my desk or while teaching it to students? Is Sujud-ul-Tilawah required by both the reciter and the listener?

A: Sujud-ul-Tilawah is Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) for both the reciter and listener. It is not Wajib (obligatory). The listener should only prostrate for Sujud-ul-Tilawah if the reciter does. If, while at your office or teaching the Qur'an to students, you happen to come across an Ayah (Qur'anic verse) which necessitates Sujud-ul-Tilawah, then you as well as the students are recommended to prostrate. Also, there is nothing wrong if you do not prostrate yourself as it was authentically reported on the authority of Zayd ibn Thabit that: ﴾when he recited Surah Al-Najm to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he did not prostrate upon reaching the Ayah of Sujud (prostration). The Prophet (peace be upon him) showed no objection to that.﴿ (Agreed upon its authenticity by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 412)

This Hadith indicates that Sujud-ul-Tilawah is not Wajib and that the listener should prostrate only if the reciter does so. Allah is the Grantor of success!

Sujud-ul-Tilawah by a Junub

Q: Is it permissible for a Junub (person in a state of major ritual impurity) to make Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation) or any other kind of Sujud. Please advise. May Allah reward you with the best!

A: Scholars hold two different opinions about the necessity of Taharah (ritual purification) from major and minor Hadath (ritual impurity that invalidates ablution) to make Sujud-ul-Shukr (Prostration of Thankfulness to Allah) and Sujud-ul-Tilawah. The more correct opinion is that it is not a prerequisite to be in a state of Taharah to make Sujud, for the lack of evidence on that. Sujud alone does not constitute Salah or falls under the same rulings and conditions of Salah. It is a part of Salah; therefore, Taharah is not a condition for it, as applies to other forms of Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) than the Qur'an. (The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to recite the Qur'an (while sitting among the Sahabah) and when he recited a Surah containing one of Ayat-ul-Sujud (Qur'anic verses of Prostration), he would prostrate and they would prostrate along with him.) There is no authentic text stating that he (peace be upon him) asked any of them not to make Sujud unless in a state of ritual purity.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 413)

Evidently, such gatherings inevitably comprise some who are not ritually pure. Had Taharah from major and minor ritual impurity been a prerequisite for making Sujud-ul-Tilawah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have informed the Sahabah, because it is impermissible to delay clarification beyond the proper time. The Prophet (peace be upon him), for example, showed through his words and deeds that a Junub (person in a state of major ritual impurity) is not allowed to recite the Qur'an.

Thus, it becomes clear that it is permissible to perform Sujud-ul-Tilawah and Sujud-ul-Shukr by a Junub, or a menstruating woman, or others who are ritually impure, according to the more correct of the two opinions of scholars. May Allah grant us success!

It is prescribed for the Imam to prostrate on reciting one of Ayat-ul-Sujud in Jahri Salah

Q: I offered Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer behind an Imam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) who recited Surah Al-'Alaq which reads: (Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).) When he said, "Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest)", I prostrated myself for Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation), but to my surprise, I heard the Imam saying, "Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah (Allah listens to those who praise Him)." I mean the Imam did not prostrate for Sujud-ul-Tilawah. Therefore, I stood up and continued to follow him again without performing Ruku' (bowing). After Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) I stood up to make up for the Ruku' I missed by offering a Rak'ah (unit of Prayer).

(Part No. 11; Page No. 414)

Kindly tell me whether I did the right thing or not, and what is the ruling on the Imam not performing Sujud-ul-Tilawah? Give us your Fatwa, may Allah reward you!

A: It is prescribed for the Imam when he recites one of Ayat-ul-Sujud (Qur'anic verses of Prostration) in a Jahri Salah (Prayer recited audibly) to prostrate for Sujud-ul-Tilawah, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this regard. However, there is nothing wrong in not performing this Sujud (prostration), as it is only Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet) and not Wajib (obligatory).

One piece of evidence proving that Sujud-ul-Tilawah is Sunnah is the authentic Hadith which states: (When Zayd ibn Thabit recited Surah Al-Najm to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he did not prostrate nor did the Prophet (peace be upon him) order Zayd to prostrate.) This Hadith indicates that Sujud-ul-Tilawah is not Wajib.

As for your Salah, it is valid. The best course of action on knowing that the Imam did not prostrate is to rise up and stand fully erect, then perform Ruku' tranquilly, then rise up from Ruku' and stand fully erect, tranquil and unhurried, and continue following the Imam. There is no blame on you for lagging behind the Imam, since you are excused for not knowing that he was performing Ruku' instead of Sujud-ul-Tilawah. The same applies to the case when the Ma'mum (person being led by an Imam in Prayer) fails to follow the Imam in Ruku' due to drowsiness, insinuating or distracting thoughts or other impediments. They only realize after the Imam has risen from Ruku'. In this case, the Ma'mum should perform Ruku' tranquilly, rise from Ruku' without rush, then continue to follow the Imam. There is no blame on them for missing Ruku' with the Imam, so long as it is not done intentionally. Allah is the Grantor of success!

Listeners to the Qur'an

may prostrate only if the reciter does

(Part No. 11; Page No. 415)

Q: Should one make Sujud-ul-Tilawah (Prostration of Recitation) upon hearing one of Ayat-ul-Sujud (Qur'anic verses of Prostration) recited on a cassette recorder? Give us your Fatwa, may Allah reward you with the best!

A: A listener to the Qur'an may make Sujud-ul-Tilawah only if the reciter does it. This is based on the Hadith narrating that: (When Zayd ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him) recited Surah Al-Najm to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he did not prostrate (upon reaching the Ayah of prostration). So, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not prostrate.) This Hadith indicates that Sujud-ul-Tilawah is not Wajib (obligatory), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not disapprove when Zayd did not prostrate.

The Hadith also denotes that the listener may prostrate only if the reciter does that. May Allah grant success to all!

Ruling on offering Salah on behalf of a deceased

(Part No. 11; Page No. 416)

Q: Since the death of my mother, I have been offering two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) on her behalf. Is that Islamically permissible?

A: This is not Islamically permissible. It is only permissible to make Du`a' (supplication) for her, pray to Allah to have mercy on her, give away Sadaqah (voluntary charity) or perform Hajj or `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) on her behalf. As for offering Salah on behalf of her, there exists no proof in Islam to support this practice. Muslims have not been ordered to offer Salah on behalf of the deceased. However, there is nothing wrong with performing Hajj or `Umrah on behalf of a dead person. The same is true with giving Sadaqah in their behalf or praying to Allah to show them mercy. This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: ﴾When a person dies, his acts come to an end, but three, ongoing charity, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (for the deceased).﴿ The Prophet did not mention Salah among the deeds which one can offer on behalf of their dead. Therefore, you have to make Du`a' for your mother, ask Allah to forgive her sins, show mercy to her and admit her into the highest rank in Jannah (Paradise). It is also commendable to give Sadaqah to the poor and the needy in the form of food, money, clothes and credit the reward for your mother.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 417)

Q: A sister from Iraq says: My brother was martyred in a battle. He used to be a regular observer of the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers. After his death, many people told us to offer a two-Rak`ah Salah and offer its reward to him, which we are used to doing now. We also credit the reward of reciting the Qur'an to him. Tell us of your opinion about this. May Allah bless you!

A: Neither the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor any of his Sahabah (Companions) are proved to have offered Salah on behalf of their dead nor are they reported to have practiced the custom of crediting the reward of reciting the Qur'an to them. Although this has been approved of as permissible by some scholars, the most correct view is that this is not permissible. The reason is that sources of all acts of worship have to be derived from the Qur'an, the practices of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah. Since neither the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor his Sahabah are reported to have offered Salah or recited the Qur'an on behalf of the dead Muslims, it is preferable not to do that. However one may pray to Allah to forgive the sins of a dead Muslim or to have mercy on him or give Sadaqah (voluntary charity) and perform Hajj or `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) on their behalf. These acts are commendable. One had better give up the practice of offering Salah or reciting the Qur'an on behalf of the dead.

Ruling on offering Salah on behalf of deceased parents

(Part No. 11; Page No. 418)

Q: Sister Um Muhammad from Riyadh asks: Is there any particular Salah (Prayer) which a person can offer in behalf of their deceased parents? If there is, what is the proper method of offering it? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: Children are not required to offer Salah in behalf of their deceased parents or anyone else. Instead, they may make Du`a' (supplication) for them, pray to Allah for their forgiveness, give away Sadaqah (voluntary charity) or perform Hajj or `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) in their behalf. It is not permissible to offer Salah in behalf of a dead person. Only the Funeral Prayer is offered over a deceased Muslim before burying them. If a person misses the Funeral Prayer, they may offer it within a period not more than three months. This is based on the Hadith to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him): (stood at the grave of Um Sa`d ibn `Ubadah to offer the Funeral Prayer after a month of her death)

Likewise, only a person who makes Hajj or `Umrah is allowed to offer the supererogatory Prayer performed after Tawaf (circumambulation around the Ka`bah), whether they happen to be performing their own Hajj or `Umrah or in behalf of others.

The origin of this ruling is that all acts of worship are Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion). It is only permissible to do acts of worship which have a religious basis in the Qur'an or Sunnah. May Allah grant us success!

Salat-ul-Tawbah

(Part No. 11; Page No. 419)

Q: When I was a young man, I committed some sins. Alhamdu lillah [All praise is due to Allah], for having guided me to make Tawbah (repentance to Allah). However, I still have doubts about whether Allah has accepted my Tawbah or not. Kindly enlighten me regarding Salat-ul-Tawbah (Prayer of Repentance). May Allah reward you with the best!

A: Alhamdu lillah, Tawbah wipes out all one's past sins. Therefore, you should give up your doubts that Allah has turned your Tawbah away. Rather, you have to expect good from your Lord and have firm belief that He has accepted your heartfelt Tawbah. This is based on the Ayah (Qur'anic verse) in which Allah says: ﴾And all of you beg Allâh to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful﴿ In the above Ayah, Allah has made success contingent upon making Tawbah. Anyone who turns in Tawbah to Allah, will achieve success. Allah (Glorified be He) says: ﴾And verily, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them, (till his death).﴿ Allah is the Ever-Truthful Who never breaks His Promises. Allah (Glorified be He) also says: ﴾O you who believe! Turn to Allâh with sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will expiate from you your sins, and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise)﴿

(Part No. 11; Page No. 420)

In the above Ayah Allah's Promise, as indicated by the words "It may be ...", should be understood to mean that He will surely fulfill His Promise.

Therefore, you have to expect good from Allah and assume that He has accepted your Tawbah provided that you are sincere and full of remorse for committing these past sins. You also have to be determined not to return to doing them again. You have to be aware of incitements of Satan. In one Hadith Qudsy (Revelation from Allah in the Prophet's words) Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: ﴾I am near to the thought of My Servant as he thinks about Me.﴿

Therefore, you ought to have firm belief that Allah has accepted your Tawbah. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴾Let none of you die without expecting good from Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted)﴿ (Related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith)

As for Salat-ul-Tawbah, it was authentically reported on the authority of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 421)

﴾Anyone who commits a sin, performs Wudu' (ablution) properly, and then offers two Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) wherein he asks Allah to forgive his sins, Allah will accept his Tawbah.﴿ (Related by Ahmad) May Allah grant us success!

Salat-ul-Istikharah

Q: How is Salat-ul-Istikharah (prayer for guidance) offered? Should Du`a'-ul-Istikharah (supplication for guidance) be said before or after Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer)?

A: Salat-ul-Istikharah is an act of Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet). Du`a'-ul-Istikharah should be said after Taslim as has been narrated in the noble Hadith.

The description of this Salah is that one should offer two supererogatory Rak'ahs (unit of Prayer). In each Rak`ah one should recite Surah Al-Fatihah and some Ayahs (Qur'anic verses). After Taslim one should raise their hands to make Du`a'-ul-Istikharah. The formula of Du`a'-ul-Istikharah as worded by the Prophet (peace be upon him) reads: ﴿Allahumma inni astakhiruka bi 'ilmika wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika wa as'aluka min fadlika al-`azhim, fa innaka taqdiru wala aqdir, wa ta'lamu wala a'lam, wa anta 'allam al-ghuyub. Allahumma in kunta ta'lamu anna hadha'l-amra (...)

(Part No. 11; Page No. 422)

khayran li fi dini wa ma`ashi wa 'aqibatu amri, fa-aqdirhu li, wa yasirhu li, thumma barik li fih, wa in kunta ta`lamu anna hadhal-'amra sharran li fi dini wa ma`ashi wa 'aqibatu amri, fa-asrifhu 'anni wa asrifni 'anhu, wa aqdir liyal-khaira haithu kan, thumma 'irdini bih. (O Allah, I seek Your help in finding out the best course of action (in this matter) by invoking Your knowledge; I ask You to empower me, and I beseech Your favor. You alone have the absolute power, while I have no power. You alone know it all, while I do not. You are the One Who knows the hidden mysteries. O Allah, if You know this thing (I am embarking on) [here mention your case] is good for me in my religion, worldly life, and my ultimate destiny, then facilitate it for me, and then bless me in my action. If, on the other hand, You know this thing is detrimental for me in my religion, worldly life, and ultimate destiny, turn it away from me, and turn me away from it, and decree what is good for me, wherever it may be, and make me content with it.)﴾ (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith)

When to recite Du`a'-ul-Istikharah in Salah

Q: A brother from Makkah asks: Does a person have to say Du`a'-ul-Istikharah (supplication for guidance) during or after Salah? If during Salah, at which part should this Du`a' be said? Is there any difference between reciting it from a book or a paper and reciting it from memory? Is it permissible to repeat Salat-ul-Istikharah (prayer for guidance) more than one time?

A: It is Mashru` (Islamically acceptable) for a Muslim to recite Du`a'-ul-Istikharah after saying Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: (If any of you intends to undertake a matter, he should at first offer two non-obligatory Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) then say:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 423)

Allahumma inni astakhiruka bi-'ilmika, ...)

This indicates that Du`a'-ul-Istikharah is recited after Salah. It is preferable for a person to raise their hands while making this Du`a' as this helps in having it answered. The above Hadith has been related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith on the authority of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him). The text of the Hadith provides: Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated: ("The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) taught us to offer Salat-ul-Istikharah in all our affairs in the same way he taught us a Surah (Qur'anic chapter) from Qu'ran. He would say: "If any of you intends to undertake a matter, he should at first offer two non-obligatory Rak`ah and then say: Allahumma inni astakhiruka bi-'ilmika, wa astaqdiruka bi-qudratik, wa as'aluka min fadlika al-'Azheem, fa-innaka taqdir wa-la aqdir, wa ta`lam wa-la 'alam, wa anta 'allamu al-ghuyub, Allahumma in kunta ta`lamu anna hadhal-'amra (...) khairun li fi dini wa ma`ashi wa 'aqibatu amri ('agilihi wa agilihi) fa-aqdirhu li, wa yasirhu li, thumma barik li fih, wa in kunta ta`lamu anna hadhal-'amra sharrun li fi dini wa ma`ashi wa 'aqibatu amri ('agilihi wa agilihi), fa-asrifhu 'anni wa asrifni 'anhu, wa aqdir liyal-khaira haithu kan, thumma 'irdini bih (O Allah, I seek Your help in finding out the best course of action (in this matter) by invoking Your knowledge; I ask You to empower me, and I beseech Your favor. You alone have the absolute power, while I have no power. You alone know it all, while I do not. You are the One Who knows the hidden mysteries. O Allah, if You know this thing (I am embarking on) [here mention his case] is good for me in my religion, worldly life, and my ultimate destiny, then facilitate it for me, and then bless me in my action. If, on the other hand, You know this thing is detrimental for me in my religion, worldly life, and ultimate destiny, turn it away from me, and turn me away from it, and decree what is good for me, wherever it may be, and make me content with it.)) (Related by Al-Bukhari)

Sujud-ul-Shukr, not Salat-ul-Shukr

(Part No. 11; Page No. 424)

Q: What is the description of Salat-ul-Shukr (Prayer of Thankfulness to Allah) and Salat-ul-Istikharah (prayer for guidance)?

A: To my knowledge, there is no mention in any Hadith regarding Salat-ul-Shukr. However, there are narrated Hadiths dealing with Sujud-ul-Shukr and Salat-ul-Tawbah (Prayer of repentance). When someone commits a sin, they may offer two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer) wherein they make heartfelt repentance to Allah from the sin they have committed. This is known as Salat-ul-Tawbah. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: (No one commits a sin where after they perform Wudu' (ablution) properly, and then offer two Rak'ahs wherein they ask Allah to forgive their sins except that Allah will accept their repentance.) (Relate by Imam Ahmad with a good Sanad (chain of narrators) from the Hadith of `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) on the authority of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him).

One may also perform Sujud-ul-Shukr upon receiving glad tidings of the birth of a new baby or upon hearing the glad tidings of Muslims' victory over their enemy or any other pleasant and good news. In this case, one may also perform Sujud similar to that one performed in Salah.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 425)

and say: "subhana rabbiya al-'ala (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High)." One may invoke Allah in his sujud, celebrate His praises and offer thanks to Him for the favor which He has conferred upon them. Whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard of some glad tidings, he would prostrate himself in thankfulness to Allah. When Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) was informed of the glad tidings of Musaylimah's (who falsely claimed to be a sent Prophet) murder, he prostrated himself in thankfulness to Allah. When `Aly (may Allah be pleased with him) found Al-Mukhdaj among the victims of Kharijites, he prostrated himself in thankfulness to Allah.

As for Salat-ul-Istikharah (prayer for guidance), it is performed in the same way as the rest of Prayers. It consists of two Rak`ahs (units of Paryer) in which one recites Al-Fatihah and some verses of the Qur'an. After concluding Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer), one should raise their hands to supplicate Allah reciting Du`a'-ul-Istikharah (supplication for guidance) which reads: (Allahumma inni astakhiruka bi 'ilmika, Wa astaqdiruka bi-qudratika, Wa as'aluka min fadlika al-'azIm Fa-innaka taqdiru Wala aqdiru, Wa ta'lamu Wala a'lamu, Wa anta 'allamu l-ghuyub. Allahumma, in kunta ta'lam anna hadha-l-amra Khairun li fi dini wa ma'ashi wa'aqibati amri (or 'ajili amri wa'ajilihi) Faqdirhu li wa yas-sirhu li thumma barik li Fihi, Wa in kunta ta'lamu anna hadha-lamra shar-run li fi dini wa ma'ashi wa'aqibati amri (or fi'ajili amri wa'ajilihi) Fasrifhu 'anni was-rifni 'anhu. Waqdir li al-khaira haithu kana Thumma radini bihi. (O Allah, I seek Your guidance [in making a choice] by virtue of Your Knowledge, and I seek ability by virtue of Your Power, and I ask You of Your Great Bounty. You have Power, I have none. And You Know, I know not. You are the Knower of the Unseen. O Allah, if in Your Knowledge, this matter (then it should be mentioned by name) is good for me both in this world and in the Hereafter (or: in my religion, my livelihood and my affairs), then ordain it for me, make it easy for me, and bless it for me. And if in Your Knowledge it is bad for me and for my religion, my livelihood and my affairs (or: for me both in this world and the next), then turn me away from it, [and turn it away from me], and ordain for me the good wherever it may be and make me pleased with it.") (Related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (Authentic Book of Hadith) from the Prophet (peace be upon him). May Allah grant us success!

Salat-ul-Tasabih

(Part No. 11; Page No. 426)

Q: What is the ruling on Salat-ul-Tasabih (Prayer of glorification)?

A: Scholars have held different views regarding the Hadith narrated about Salat-ul-Tasabih. The most correct view is that this Hadith falls under the category of Hadith Shadh (a Hadith narrated by a trustworthy narrator, not in line with the narration of other trustworthy narrators in terms of wording, chain of narrators, or both). Its Matn (text of a Hadith) has also been categorized as Munkar (rejected). It is not also in line with other authentic Hadiths narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding supererogatory Salah which Allah has legislated for His Servants. Thus, the correct view is that this Hadith is not Sahih (authentic) for the reasons mentioned above. Moreover, the Sanad (chain of narrators) of this Hadith is weak. May Allah grant us success!

Bid'ahs practiced in the month of Rajab

(Part No. 11; Page No. 427)

Q: Some people single out the month of Rajab for offering some acts of worship like performing Salat-ul-Ragha'ib (Prayer for great bestowals or wishes) or celebrating a certain night of this month. Is there any proof in the Shari'ah (Islamic Law) to support such practices? May Allah reward you with the best!

A: It is an act of Bid'ah (innovation in religion) to single out the month of Rajab for offering Salat-ul-Ragha'ib or for celebrating the 27th night, which people believe to have been the night when Isra' (Night Journey) and Mi'raj (Ascension to Heaven) took place. These are invented practices that have no basis in Shari'ah. Muslim inquiring scholars have warned against them and scholars have reiterated that Salat-ul-Ragha'ib, which is offered on the first Friday night of Rajab, is an act of Bid'ah (innovation in religion). It is also an act of Bid'ah to celebrate the 27th night of Rajab in the belief that this was the Night of Isra' and Mi'raj. There is no proof in the Shari'ah to support these practices. There is no report specifying the exact night when Isra' and Mi'raj took place. Even if such a night had been specified, it still would not be permissible to celebrate it as neither the Prophet (peace be upon him) nor any of his Sahabah (Companions) or Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them all) are known to have celebrated this night. If celebrating it was Sunnah (an act following the example of the Prophet), they would have preceded us in doing it.

(Part No. 11; Page No. 428)

Certainly, all goodness lies in following in their footsteps and adhering to their way of life. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (And the foremost to embrace Islâm of the Muhâjirûn (those who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah) and the Ansâr (the citizens of Al-Madinah who helped and gave aid to the Muhâjirûn) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allâh is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.) It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: (Anyone who introduces anything into this matter of ours (Islam) that is not part of it will have it rejected.) (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) The Prophet (peace be upon him) is also reported to have said: (Anyone who does an action which is not in accordance with this matter of ours (Islam) will have it rejected.) (Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih [Authentic Hadith Book]) It was the Prophet's habit to repeat the following words in his Khutbahs (sermons): (Ama Ba'd (Now then), the best of speech is the Book of Allah, the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the most evil of matters are those which are newly-invented (in religion), and every Bid'ah is a Dalalah (deviation from the right).) (Narrated by Muslim)

It is the duty of all Muslims to follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), hold steadfastly to it, and enjoin one another to follow it, and to avoid falling in all Bid'ahs, acting upon the Saying of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He): (Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwâ (virtue, righteousness and piety)) In another Ayah Allah (may He be Praised) also states:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 429)

(By Al-'Asr (the time).) (Verily, man is in loss,) (Except those who believe (in Islâmic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth [i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'ruf) which Allâh has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar) which Allâh has forbidden], and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allâh's Cause during preaching His religion of Islâmic Monotheism or Jihâd).) The Prophet (peace be upon him) is also reported to have said: ('Religion is sincerity.' They said, 'To whom, O Messenger of Allah?' He (peace be upon him) answered, 'To Allah, His Book, His Messenger, and the Imams (leaders) of Muslims and their common people.') (Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih)

There is nothing wrong, however, with performing 'Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) in the month of Rajab. It was authentically reported in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) (performed Umrah in Rajab.) It was the custom of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) to perform 'Umrah in Rajab as has been stated by Al-Hafizh ibn Rajab (may Allah be merciful to him) in his book "Al-Lata'if" on the authority of 'Umar, his son and 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with them all). Ibn Sirin also reported that this was the regular practice of the Salaf. May Allah grant us success!

Supererogatory Salah does not become

Wajib even if one observes it regularly

(Part No. 11; Page No. 430)

Does Supererogatory Salah become Wajib if one observes it on a regular basis?

A: No. It does not become Wajib (obligatory). One always has the choice to do or not to do voluntary acts of worship, which never rise to the degree of Wajib. However, the case is different regarding voluntary performance of Hajj and `Umrah (Lesser Pilgrimage) which become Wajib once one enters into the state of Ihram (ritual state for Hajj and `Umrah). This is based on the Ayah (Qur'anic verse) which reads: ﴾And perform properly (i.e. all the ceremonies according to the ways of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), the Hajj and 'Umrah (i.e. the pilgrimage to Makkah) for Allâh.﴿ According to the Ayah, one is obliged to complete the rituals of Hajj and `Umrah once they enter into the state of Ihram. As for other voluntary acts of worship like supererogatory Salah (Prayer), voluntary Fasting or Sadaqah (voluntary charity), one may or may not observe them. If, for instance, one starts to offer supererogatory Salah, one may be allowed to discontinue doing it. By the same token, one may also break their voluntary Fasting, or decline to deliver a Sadaqah to the poor after having intended to do so. However, it is preferable not to decline to do these voluntary acts of worship.

The point that should be made clear here is that all voluntary acts of worship do not rise to the degree of Wajib

(Part No. 11; Page No. 431)

with the exception of voluntary Hajj and `Umrah in which rituals become obligatory upon one to fulfill once they enter into the state of Ihram.

The Ruling on Giving Up Supererogatory Acts of Worship

Q: A sister by the name, Um Yusuf, from Blessed Makkah asks: Does one bear a sin for giving up offering some supererogatory acts of worship which they used to do? During my pregnancy, I gave up fasting Mondays and Thursdays. Issue your Fatwa may Allah reward you with the best!

A: A Muslim is rewarded for every supererogatory act of worship they do, like observing regular Fasting on Mondays and Thursdays of every week, Fasting the White Days (13th, 14th, and 15th of every Hijri month), regular offering of Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer after sunrise) and Witr (Prayer with an odd number of units). There will be no sin on them if they do not observe these supererogatory acts of worship. However, a Muslim should observe stressed Sunnahs on a regular basis on account of the fact that by observing them they not only attain great reward from Allah but also make up for the shortcomings that take place in the obligatory Salah. May Allah grant us success!

The Ruling on Offering Salah in Hijr Isma`il

(Part No. 11; Page No. 432)

Q: Some people gather in great numbers to offer Salah (Prayer) at Hijr Isma'il. Is there any merit in offering Salah in this place?

A: It is Mustahab (desirable) to offer Salah in Hijr Isma`il as it is a part of the Ka`bah. It was authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) (entered the Ka`bah in the year of the Opening of Makkah where he offered two Rak`ahs (units of Prayer).)

It was also authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also (said to `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) when she wanted to enter the Ka`bah: "Offer Salah in Hijr for it is a part of the Ka`bah.")

It is, however, preferable not to offer the obligatory Salah inside the Ka`bah or in Hijr

(Part No. 11; Page No. 433)

as this was not done by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Besides, some scholars are of the view that Salah offered in the Ka`bah or in Hijr is not valid as the Hijr is a part of the Ka`bah.

Accordingly, it should be made clear that the obligatory Salah must be offered outside the Ka`bah and outside Hijr following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is recommended to do this in order to avoid the disagreement of scholars over the invalidity of Salah offered in the Ka`bah and Hijr. May Allah grant us success!

Greeting the Reciter of the Qur'an after a Supererogatory Salah

Q: Is it permissible for someone who finishes offering Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid (two-unit-Prayer to greet the mosque) to greet one sitting next to him who is reciting the Qur'an? Or should he or she not interrupt his or her recitation lest he or she be distracted?

A: It is an act of Sunnah to greet and shake hands with him. This is based on the authentic Hadiths in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: (When two Muslims meet and shake hands, their sins will be fall off them as dry leaves fall off a tree.) It is also narrated on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that:

(Part No. 11; Page No. 434)

"The Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) would shake hands with one another upon meeting and would embrace one another upon returning from a journey." (Related by Al-Tabarani). The narrators of this Hadith are recognized for their reliability in narrating authentic Hadiths.

This is due to the fact that the acts of greeting and shaking hands help in fostering affection and familiarity among Muslims. However, pausing recitation of the Qur'an for an emergent condition is a praiseworthy act. May Allah grant us success!

End of Eleventh Part. To be followed by

Twelfth Part which opens with the Book of Congregational Prayer